MORE WORDS ANCIENT & MODERN

ERNEST WEEKLEY

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THE ROMANCE OF WORDS

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AN ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF MODERN ENGLISH

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MORE WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY ERNEST WEEKLEY, M.A.

"The language of a people is no trifle. The national mind is reflected in the national speech."

DEAN ALFORD.

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

"Zenon disoit qu'il avoit deux sortes de disciples: les uns, qu'il nommoit φιλολόγους, curieux d'apprendre les choses; les autres λογοφίλους, qui n'avoyent soing que du langage."

MONTAIGNE, i, 25.

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FIRST EDITION, 1927

PREFACE

In the Preface to Words Ancient and Modern, published last autumn, it was suggested that, if that collection of "short stories" found readers, it might have a sequel. A reprint of the earlier volume having become necessary, the promised sequel is now offered to word-lovers. It has a distinctive character, in that it deals only with compounds,[1] obvious or disguised, a class of words on which dictionaries give but little information, though their history is often fascinating.

It follows from the nature of the subject that this volume is less strictly "etymological" than its predecessor, though occasionally, e.g. in the discussion of *high-flown* and *tenter-hooks*, generally accepted theories are mildly combated. In a few cases also it is shown that the study of medieval surnames and nicknames may carry the history of a compound centuries farther back than the earliest records of the Oxford Dictionary.[2]

The author feels a certain diffidence in reappearing so soon in print, but he has reason to believe that a small but kindly public is good enough to take an interest in his etymological recreations and to regard with gentle tolerance his incurable habit of wandering from the point. If he should ever be guilty of a third

[1] There are two or three dubious cases, i.e. simple words which have now assumed a compound appearance. The most brazen of these impostors is *wiseacre*.

[2] This name is used for the great national work usually known as the New English Dictionary or the Oxford English Dictionary, the completion of which may be expected early next year. The author's debt to it is immense.

volume, completing the " trilogy," it will deal neither with simple words nor compounds, but with another well-defined group of phenomena observed in the same boundless field.

ERNEST WEEKLEY.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NOTTINGHAM,
June 1927.

CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
ASPEN-LEAF	1	GODSEND	60
BANSHEE	3	GRASS-WIDOW	61
BEANFEAST	6	HELPMEET	64
BEEFEATER	9	HIDE-BOUND	65
BEETLE-BROWED	13	HIGH-FLOWN	67
BLOOD-WITE	16	HODGE-PODGE	69
BLUE-STOCKING	17	HOITY-TOITY	71
BONFIRE	19	HOMESICK	74
BOOTLEGGER	21	HONEYMOON	77
BRIDEGROOM	22	HOUSELEEK	78
BUCKET-SHOP	24	HUSBANDMAN	79
BUSKIN	26	IRONSIDE	83
CARFAX	27	JACKANAPES	85
CARPET-BAGGER	29	JOLLY-BOAT	89
CASTAWAY	30	KIDNAP	92
CATCHWORD	31	LEGERDEMAIN	94
CHEESEMONGER	33	LION-HUNTER	95
CLODHOPPER	36	LIVELONG	97
CLOSE-QUARTERS	38	LOGGERHEAD	98
COCKSURE	40	MAELSTROM	100
COXCOMB	42	MEALY-MOUTHED	101
CROSSPATCH	43	MOUNTEBANK	104
DAPPLE-GREY	46	NIGHTMARE	106
DISMAL	48	OVERWEENING	110
FOLKLORE	50	PALMISTRY	112
FOXGLOVE	52	PIECEMEAL	114
FRANKPLEDGE	54	PIEPOWDER	116
GALLIPOT	56	PIKESTAFF	117
GODFATHER	57	PLUM-PUDDING	119

	PAGE		PAGE
POINT-BLANK . .	122	STEPMOTHER . .	156
PURBLIND . .	123	SWAN-SONG . .	157
RAKE-HELL . .	126	SWEEPSTAKE . .	158
RAMSHACKLE . .	128	TENTER-HOOKS .	160
RED-HANDED . .	129	TUESDAY . .	164
RIGMAROLE . .	130	TURNPIKE . .	166
RINGLEADER . .	134	UNDERTAKER . .	168
ROUND-ROBIN . .	137	UNLESS . . .	170
RUNAGATE . .	138	UPSHOT . . .	172
SCOT-FREE . .	141	UPSIDE-DOWN . .	173
SELF-HELP . .	142	WANTON . . .	175
SLOGAN . . .	145	WELCOME . .	178
SPICK-AND-SPAN .	148	WELLADAY . .	179
SPINDRIFT . .	150	WERWOLF . .	181
STALWART . .	151	WILD-GOOSE CHASE .	184
STAR-CHAMBER .	153	WISEACRE . .	185
STARK-NAKED . .	154		

MORE WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Aspen-leaf

It is doubtful whether, outside poetry, people ever "tremble like an aspen-leaf" nowadays. The more prosaic jelly is the accepted contemporary symbol. Anyone who has watched a fine specimen of *populus tremula* on a still night will easily understand how it must have appealed to our country-dwelling ancestors as an emblem of perpetual motion. Danish has the corresponding expression "skjælve som et aspelöv," and Ludwig (1716) renders Ger. "Er zittert wie ein äspen[1]-laub" by "he trembles like an aspen-leaf; he shakes like a wet cat; he trembles or quakes for fear." French, having given the name *tremble* to the tree itself, is reduced to saying "trembler comme une feuille."

The association is now always with fear, but in earlier times the *aspen-leaf* was symbolical of any quivering movement. Shakespeare uses it in the generally accepted sense when he makes the Hostess, who "cannot abide swaggerers," shake "an't were an aspen-leaf" (2 Henry IV, ii, 4); but in the only other passage in which it occurs, the simile is of quite another kind:

> Oh! had the monster seen those lily hands
> Tremble like aspen-leaves upon a lute
> And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
> He would not then have touch'd them for his life.
>
> (Titus Andronicus, ii, 5.)

[1] The name of the tree is now spelt *espe*; it is also called *zitter-pappel*, tremble-poplar.

SARDAR SINGH COLLEGE

In the 16th century the female tongue was likened to an *aspen-leaf*. The Oxford Dictionary quotes from Sir Thomas More, "If they [women] myghte be suffred to begin ones in the congregacion to fal in disputing, those aspen leaves of theirs would never leave waggyng." [1] At a much earlier date it was even possible to "quake like an aspen-leaf" with anger. At the conclusion of the Friar's Tale, in which a Summoner plays a very unedifying part:

> 'This Somonour in his styropes hye stood.
> Upon this Frere his herte was so wood,[2]
> That lyk an aspen leef he quook for ire.
>
> (Chauc. D, 1665.)

The name *aspen*, now given to the tree, for *asp*, is due to the frequent occurrence of *aspen-leaf*, in which the first element is either the Anglo-Saxon genitive, as in *æspan-rind*, asp-bark, or else an adjectival formation of the same type as *oaken*, *beechen*, etc. Both *asp* and *aps* [3] are still used in dialect, and Richard Jefferies tells us that woodmen always say *asp*, not *aspen*.

We have something like it in *linden*, the popularity of which in suburban villa nomenclature started in the early 19th century with the fashionable enthusiasm for German poetry and its inevitable *linden-baum* or lime-tree. The German name is *linde*, the dative plural of which is familiar in "Unter den Linden." The Anglo-Saxon was *lind*, surviving in Lyndhurst and other place-names, but this has not been current English for centuries.

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 34.
[2] Mad, enraged. See p. 124, *n*. 1.
[3] Cf. *waps* for *wasp*. *Aps* is the origin of the surname Apps.

Banshee

"'Why,' inquired Mrs. Plornish, reverting to the Italian language, 'why ope bad man no see?'" (Little Dorrit, ch. 13). Mrs. Plornish's linguistic gifts were recalled to my mind on seeing, in the Times Literary Supplement (Feb. 10, 1927), an advertisement for a curator to the Dublin Museum. Applications were to be addressed to "an rúnaidhe, coimisiún um stát-sheirbhís." In this specimen of Erse, or, as some patriots prefer to call it, Gaelic, the definite article and the preposition alone are Celtic; the word for "secretary" is formed from Old Norse *rūn*, secret (rune), and the rest, "commission . . . state-service," is English, ultimately of Latin origin.

A dying language is a sad sight to the philologist and a matter of complete indifference to the man in the street; sometimes not quite of indifference, judging by an expression of opinion I once caught in a Cardiff hotel from the lips of a commercial traveller, who, discussing Welsh, declared that language to be "a lot of gibberish, that ought to be done away with." The Celtic languages are no doubt doomed, but Welsh may survive for a long time as a result of the intelligent efforts made for its preservation. There are many ways of delaying the death of a language. There is only one certain means of hastening its end, and that is to enforce its use. An Irish Government which understood the national psychology would realize that the surest method of reviving Erse would be the prohibition of its use under the severest penalties.[1]

[1] The resuscitation of small nationalities after the World War has had much to do with the artificial revival of languages: "Fifteen years ago every literate Czech transacted most of his business in German; now his children are studying Czech. The Walloons

A characteristic of Celtic is its inability to resist contact with another language. The Roman conquest of Gaul had as a result the complete replacement of Gaulish by Latin, which gradually evolved into French. The Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain was equally effective from the linguistic point of view, and the number of " Ancient British " words directly borrowed by English does not amount to a dozen. The number of such words known to the modern reader is considerably larger, a fact due, not to their adoption by the working language, but to the word-collecting habits of the antiquary and the poet. Thomas Pennant, in his Tour in Scotland (1771), first[1] drew general attention to the picturesque attractions of the Highlands. He was followed by Johnson and Boswell. It is in writers of this type that we first find, mentioned as curiosities, such picturesque words as *banshee*, *cairn*, *claymore*, etc. After them come the Romantic revival and the popularity of Scott. At a much earlier date Spenser, in his View of the Present State of Ireland (1596), had used a number of Irish words, but the Irish contribution to everyday English is practically nil.[2]

The earliest records of *banshee* are from Scotland. Pennant speaks of " the cries and shrieks of Benshi,

refuse to learn French, and talk grandly of separating themselves from Belgium. The Norwegians revive an ancient peasant dialect, and so strive to make themselves unintelligible to the Danes. The more visionary Irish plan to stamp out English and return to Gaelic. And gabble of the same sort is heard from the Slovenes, the Finns, the Letts, the Basques, the Egyptians, and even the Corsicans " (H. L. Mencken).

[1] Burt's Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland (1754) did not attract much notice.

[2] *Tory*, outlaw, bandit, is the only purely Irish word in general English use. See p. 37, *n*, 2.

or the fairie's wife," but it was Scott who made the word familiar :

> Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
> The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream.
> (Lady of the Lake, iii. 7.)

Scott's " Note " says, " Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic, spirit attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster. A superstition of the same kind is, I believe, universally received by the inferior ranks of the native Irish."

I do not know how old this belief is. According to Joyce (English as we speak it in Ireland, 1910), the original meaning was " a woman from the ' shee ' or fairy-dwelling, but in modern times, and among English speakers, the word ' banshee ' has become narrowed in its application, and signifies a female spirit that attends certain families and is heard ' keening ' or crying aloud at night round the house, when some member of the family is about to die." This almost suggests that the common Sassenach possession of a family ghost or castle spectre was felt as another wrong to Ireland and countered by the adoption of the *banshee*.

Quite apart from her " keening " propensities, the *banshee* is of great philological interest. The second element means home (of the fairies), and, according to Macbain, is cognate with Lat. *sedes* and Gr. ἕδος, seat. The first syllable is the general Celtic name for wife, woman, found as Gael. *bean*, Welsh *bun*. As the Celtic labial corresponds to a palatal in the other Aryan languages, the word is ultimately identical

with Eng. *quean*,[1] Old High Ger. *quena*, Goth. *qino*, and Old Norse *kona*; also with Gr. γυνή, Sanskrit *gnā*, Pers. *zan*,[2] Armenian *kin*, and Old Slav. *žena*. In some of these languages this "pivotal" word has a meaning the reverse of complimentary, e.g. Dutch *kween* means a barren cow. Our own *quean* has been more or less vituperative since the 13th century, but I do not know on what authority Miss Sitwell credits her with a standardized petticoat:

> **Hell's flames seem flowering rows of beans**
> **As red as petticoats of queans.**

Beanfeast

The *bean* surpasses all other vegetables in its figurative appeal. The Roman word-hunter Festus interprets the *hil* of *nihil* as *hilum*, the black speck attached to a broad bean. This etymology, which is very possibly correct, appears to have been known to Hobbes, who has "not the black of a bean" for "not a whit." *Bean* itself often occurs in Mid. English as an emblem of something valueless. Langland has "noght a bene" in a passage (Piers Plowman, B. iii, 141) where the variant reading is "noght a russhe." It is a long way from this medieval phrase to our "not a bean," a new and independent coinage too modern to be recorded by the Oxford Dictionary. The importance of knowing "how many beans make five" was realized early in the 19th century, but the Dictionary does not note the "full of beans," which we owe to stable slang, though the equivalent *beany* is

[1] *Queen* is related, but not identical.

[2] Hence Pers. *zanāna*, women's apartments, adopted by Urdu and usually spelt *zenana* in English.

duly registered. Other quite modern developments are " to give beans," the vocative " old bean," and the American use of *bean* for head, the latter metaphor resulting in the verb to *bean*, used, as I gather from American crook novels, in phrases which link the patrolman's club with the citizen's " block." Also American is " spilling the beans " as an alternative to " giving away the show."

It is rather surprising to find that the Oxford Dictionary's first record for *beanfeast* [1] is as recent as 1882. It is of course much older. To Notes and Queries (March 15, 1902) a contributor sent the following extract from Time's Telescope for 1820: " Mr. Day was the possessor of a small estate in Essex, at no great distance from Fairlop Oak. To this venerable tree he used, on the first Friday in July, annually to repair; thither it was his custom to invite a party of his neighbours to accompany him, and, under the shade of its branches and leaves, to dine on beans and bacon. Mr. Day, during his life, annually visited his favourite spot; and, in memory of its origin, never failed, on the day of the fair, to provide several sacks of beans, with a proportionate quantity of bacon, which he distributed, from the trunk of the tree, to the persons there assembled. For several years before the death of the benevolent, although humorous, founder of this public ' beanfeast,' the pump and block makers of Wapping, to the number of thirty or forty, went annually to the fair in a boat, made, like that of Robinson Crusoe, of one entire piece of fir. The amphibious vessel was covered with an awning, mounted on a coach-carriage, and

[1] The colloquial *beano* was apparently unknown when the letter *B* was on the stocks.

drawn by six post-horses, the whole adorned with ribands, flags and streamers."

This takes *beanfeast* back to 1820, probably also to the 18th century, and supplies a plausible interpretation of the name, for the "first Friday in July" sees the broad bean at its best. It seems possible that the use of the word for a workmen's outing may have originated with the "pump and block makers of Wapping."

The printers' *wayzgoose* is apparently a much older word. It is first recorded (1678), as *waygoose*, in Joseph Moxon's Mechanick Exercises, and explained as a feast given by the master-printer to his men just before work by candlelight begins: "These waygooses are always kept about Bartholomew tide." The statement in the English Dialect Dictionary that *waygoose* means stubble-goose appears to be without foundation, and the Oxford Dictionary doubts whether the compound had originally any connection with *goose*, a doubt which is strengthened by Moxon's plural *-gooses*. Still, the date of the festival borders on the goose season.

The form *wayzgoose* appears to be due to the lexicographer Bailey, who, in his octavo dictionary (1733), has "*wayz:* a bundle of straw," "*wayz-goose:* a stubble-goose, an entertainment given to journeymen at the beginning of winter." This is perhaps an attempt at connecting *waygoose* with the dialect *wase*, wisp of straw. It is noteworthy that Bailey dropped these entries from his large folio dictionary of 1736. But the deed was done, and later lexicographers, e.g. Ash (1775), repeated Bailey's statement, and succeeded in making *wayzgoose* the accepted form of this mysterious word.

Beefeater

Just now (June 1927) newspapers are tempting the capricious appetite of the jaded cross-word solver with a new diversion entitled " Do you know ? " The questions set cover the whole range of human knowledge, and the appended answers contain much that is impressive, e.g. the fact that " The Whitsuntide dance at Luxemburg begins at Sure Bridge and ends at St. Willibrod's Church, Echternach," is one of those vital truths which are too apt to be neglected in these hurrying days. It is inevitable that " etymology " should enter into these popular questionnaires, and that many etymological ghosts, insecurely laid, should once more squeak and gibber in the daily press. Our old friend *cabal* has naturally turned up with Clifford, Ashley and Co. forming his spectral train, nor is one surprised to find once more the pronouncement that *beefeater* is " a corruption of the French word *buffetier*, server at the *buffet*."

This myth dates from about the end of the 18th century. Archdeacon Todd, re-editing Johnson in 1818, printed the following fantasy : " Mr. Steevens [1] derives it thus : ' *Beefeater* may come from *buffetier*,[2] one who attends at the sideboard, which was anciently placed in a *beaufet*.[3] The business of the *beefeaters* was, and perhaps is still, to attend the King at meals. This derivation is corroborated by the circumstance of the *beefeaters* having a hasp suspended to their

[1] George Steevens (1736–1800), commentator on Shakespeare.

[2] When Steevens wrote, no French word *buffetier* was known. It has since been discovered in Old French, but it meant a dealer in wine and vinegar, also apparently in one case a tub-washer.

[3] This English perversion of *buffet* was used in the 18th century for a china-cupboard.

belts for the reception of keys." Elizabeth Penrose, the author of Mrs. Markham's History of England (1823), the sale of which was prodigious, is responsible for the wide diffusion of this fiction: "Mrs. M.: You have also seen how the men were dressed. Don't you remember the beef-eaters you saw in London? They wear the same kind of dress that was worn by Henry the Eighth's beef-eaters. Mary: Beef-eaters, mamma! I never heard such a comical name. Mrs. M.: It is a strange corruption of a very plain word, *buffetier*, a person who waits at a *buffet*, or sideboard."

Not only Richard, George, and little Mary, who, "though she was very young, seated herself on a footstool at Mrs. Markham's feet and listened with great attention," but even scholars like Trench and Max Müller eagerly swallowed this apparition, "hasp" and all, and Steevens's wild guess joined the company of those popular fictions usually described as "well-known facts." At first there were some doubters. The eminent medievalist, Sir Francis Palgrave, reflecting that the *beefeaters* were not table-attendants, but archers,[1] later halberdiers, was moved to put forward a rival etymology. A type of halberd called in French a *langue-de-bœuf*, i.e. ox-tongue, in allusion to the shape of its blade, was introduced into Mid. English as *longe-de-bef*. Palgrave ingeniously (or ingenuously) suggested that "As from *halbert* and *musket* are derived *halberteer* and *musketeer*, so *longe-de-befeteer* would be formed from *longe-de-bef*, and might afterwards be abbreviated into *befeteer*." Thus was word-history written by the learned in 1836.

A *beefeater*, incredible as it may appear, is an eater

1 "*Archer*: an archer, or bowman; also a yeoman of the (king's) gard" (Cotgrave, 1611).

of beef; cf. Ger. "*bratenfresser*: a great beef-eater" (Ludwig, 1716). In the 16th century the compound had two special meanings: (1) a burly Englishman,[1] as compared with less favoured races, (2) a pampered menial. The Yeoman of the Guard was both. "Poudre-beef[2] lubber,"[3] for an over-fed manservant, occurs in Chaloner's translation of The Praise of Folly (1549). "Powder-beef slave" is in the old play Wily Beguiled (1606). In Marston's Histriomastix (printed in 1610), the hero thus apostrophizes his "impudent, audatious serving-men":

> Begone yee greedy beef-eaters; y'are best:
> The Callis cormorants from Dover roade
> Are not so chargeable as you to feed.

As a nickname for the Yeomen of the Guard and the Tower warders *beefeater* is well attested in the 17th century. The association appears in the following flippancy[4] of that period:

> That Thou wilt be pleased to look on the grief
> Of the King's old servants and send them relief,
> Restore to the Yeomen o' the Guard chines of beef;
> Te rogamus audi nos!

Miège, in his French-English Dictionary (1688), tells us: "C'est ainsi qu'on appelle par dérision les Yeomen of the Gard dans la Cour d'Angleterre, qui sont des gardes à peu près comme les cent Suisses en France.

[1] In this sense *beefeater* was perhaps originally a translation of Fr. *mangeur de bœuf*, a derisive description of the Englishman, as *frog-eater* or *froggy* (cf. *toady*, p. 95, *n.* 2) is of the Frenchman. *Mangeur de pommes* is still French for a Norman.

[2] *Powder(ed)-beef* was salt beef, a stock article of diet in the days when the butcher did not call regularly.

[3] *Lubber* was once used of a household drudge. Hence Milton's *lubber-fiend*, i.e. Lob-lie-by-the-fire (Allegro, 110).

[4] Quoted, with modernized spelling, in Notes and Queries.

Et on leur donne ce nom-là, parce qu'à la Cour ils ne vivent que de bœuf ; par opposition à ces collèges d'Angleterre, où les écoliers ne mangent que du mouton." Bailey (1736) has " *beefeaters :* a nickname given the Yeomen of the Guard, because their commons is beef, when on waiting." The Queen of the Blue-stockings (see p. 17) writes (1745), " I can eat more buttered roll in a morning than a great girl at a boarding-school, and more beef at dinner than a Yeoman of the Guards."

We need not perhaps attach great importance to the special rations attributed to the Yeomen of the Guard. *Beef* has always been symbolical of a generous diet producing the " bluff King Hal " type of physique. There is even a legend of an English general who rallied his fleeing troops with the burning words, " Are you Englishmen, who eat beef, going to be licked by a lot of damned foreigners, who live on oranges ? "

Beefeater, serving-man, is a variation on a much earlier name reflecting the original conception of domestic service as a state in which satisfaction of the elementary needs is assured. Henry II, in his traditional outburst against Becket, spoke of his knights as " the cowards that eat my bread." In the Laws of King Ethelbert, Anglo-Sax. *hlāf-æta*, loaf-eater, is used of a household servant, one who eats his master's bread. The master himself was the *hlāford*, for *hlāf-weard*, loaf-ward, and the mistress was the *hlæfdige*, loaf-kneader, the second element being cognate with *dough*. These gave our *lord*[1] and *lady*.[1] The history of these two ancient titles, and of the ups and downs they have experienced, is fascinating, but too long to

[1] The northern forms became *laird* and *leddy*.

be included here. It is, however, interesting to note that, as a correlative to *lady*, *lord* is now, except in one specific sense, supplanted by *gentleman*.

Lordly is a very old word. It has always connoted majesty, often with a tinge of arrogance, and occasionally something worse; cf. "drunk as a lord." Oddly used by Coverdale on the occasion when Jael brought out the best china (Judges v. 25), it has been retained by the Authorized and Revised Versions. This "lordly dish" represents the "phiala principum" of the Vulgate and λεκάνη ὑπερεχόντων of the Septuagint. *Ladylike*, on the other hand, is comparatively modern, and, so far as the Oxford Dictionary's records go, has always been associated with a gentle dignity. But the word is somewhat older than those records, and once had a sense more intimately connected with that of *lordly*. Cooper (1573) explains Ovid's "conjunx imperiosa" as "a ladylike wife that will bee obeyed."

Beetle-browed

It is difficult to describe an aged oak without introducing the epithet *gnarled*, an adjective due to the taste and fancy of a compositor, who, in the 1623 Shakespeare folio, substituted it for the usual *knurled*[1]:

> Merciful Heaven!
> Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
> Splitt'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
> Than the soft myrtle.
> (Measure for Measure, ii. 2.)

This misprint slept undisturbed in Shakespeare till the 19th-century Romantics revived it. Similarly we

[1] Probably from archaic *knur*, knot in wood; cf. Ger. *knorren*, earlier "*knore*: a knurr, knurl, gnar, knub, knag, knast or knot in wood or trees" (Ludwig, 1716).

should not be able to speak of a "beetling crag," if Shakespeare had not used the verb to *beetle* in this particular sense :

> What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea ?
>
> (Hamlet, i. 4.)

This is practically the only [1] occurrence of the verb before Scott revived it, with so many other fine Shakespearean words. Shakespeare appears to have coined it as a nonce-word from the old adjective *beetle-browed*, quite common in Mid. English and first found in Piers Plowman (A. v. 109). It is always used of a grim and frowning aspect, and *beetle-brows* is the usual rendering of "supercilia conjuncta" in the early Latin dictionaries. Spenser uses it in his description of Phantastes :

> A man of yeares yet fresh, as mote appere,
> Of swarth complexion and of crabbed hew,
> That him full of melancholy did shew ;
> Bent hollow beetle browes, sharpe staring eyes,
> That mad or foolish seemd.
>
> (Faerie Queene, II. ix. 52.)

The epithet exemplifies that close observation of nature that the moderns have almost lost. Few people realize that some species of beetles have tufted antennæ which look like shaggy eyebrows. This has also been noticed in French, which has "sourcils de hanneton," lit. cockchafer's eyebrows, "franges qui portent de petites houppes imitant les deux cornes de cet insecte" (Littré). The Oxford Dictionary apparently records *beetle-brows* only as an adjunct of human beings. In

[1] The Oxford Dictionary also records it for 1798 from a poetaster named Hucks, but it was Scott who really brought it back into poetic use.

1607 William Finch, mariner, described the *beetle-brows* of an African fish (Purchas).

Shakespeare also uses *beetle-headed* for block-headed (Taming of the Shrew, iv. 1), from *beetle*,[1] a heavy mallet or an implement used by laundresses for beating linen. This *beetle* is connected with *beat*, while the insect *beetle* (Anglo-Sax. *bitel*) is connected with *bite*. Among the Epigrams (1562) of John Heywood occurs the following specimen of Tudor badinage :

> " Were I to wed again, wife, I make a vow
> I would not wed a wife with a beetle-brow."
> " And I (quoth she) rather would a husband wed
> With a beetle-brow than with a beetle-head."

The exact share of each word in " blind (dumb, deaf) as a beetle " is undetermined.

There can be little doubt that the curious verb to *browbeat* has been evolved in some illogical way from *beetle-browed*. The *brow* of *browbeat* is that of the beater, not of the beaten, and the verb describes the grim and frowning aspect of some Aristarchus, " whose looks were as a breeching to a boy " (Marlowe, Edward II, v. 4). Johnson's definition is " to depress with severe brows, or stern and lofty looks."

[1] It was perhaps this word which introduced the *-l-* into *battledore*, now a toy, but in the 15th century a " waschynge betyl " (Promptorium Parvulorum, 1440). This is apparently Prov. *batedor*, lit. beater, and came from the South of France at the time of the English occupation. Outdoor laundry-work is one of the things that strike Englishmen travelling in the South. The French word is " *battoir :* a rammer, or paving beetle ; also, a launderesses batting staffe " (Cotgrave, 1611). The *shuttlecock* is named from its " shooting " backward and forward like a weaver's shuttle. The paviour's *beetle* was sometimes too heavy for one man to wield. Falstaff, referring to the parting injunction of the Lord Chief Justice, soliloquizes, " If I do, fillip me with a three-man beetle " (2 Henry IV, i. 2).

Blood-wite

An Anglo-Saxon who committed homicide had two payments to make. The bereaved relatives were appeased by the *wergild*, of which the first element appears also in *werwolf* (q.v.), while the second is identical with the *geld* of *Danegeld* and with *yield*, the thing surrendered or paid over. In addition to this the King or Earl exacted the *blood-wite*, from Anglo-Sax. *wīte*, punishment, blame. This compound is obsolete except among historians and historical novelists, but we have a rather interesting survival of the second element. *Wite* has had a continuous history from Anglo-Saxon times. Johnson quotes it from Spenser, and, according to the English Dialect Dictionary, the word is still in general use in Scotland and the northern counties in the sense of blame, punishment, especially in to "lay the wite on." Probably another generation will see the end of it, except for its disguised survival in a very colloquial word.

Besides the verb *wītan*, to impute blame, Anglo-Saxon had the compound *ætwītan*, to "at-wite," meaning to reproach, taunt with. This became *atwite* in Mid. English, and then, with the common loss of the unaccented prefix, *twite*, which still survives in Dorset and Somerset, though Palsgrave (1530) regarded it as a north-country word: "*I twyhte one*, I caste hym in the tethe or the nose: je lui reprouche. This terme is northren." Spenser uses it of bitter and heart-broken reproaches:

> And evermore she did him sharply twight
> For breach of faith to her, which he had firmly plight.
> (Faerie Queene, V. vi. 12.)

By Shakespeare's time it had lost its *-e*, but remained a dignified word: "And there's for twitting me with

perjury," says Clarence, as he adds his stab to those of his two brothers (3 Henry VI, v. 5).

The colloquial monosyllable *twit* is thus all that is left in English of a compound verb found in the other Teutonic languages, though with a different prefix; cf. Ger. *verweisen*, Dutch *verwijten*, Goth. *fraweitan*.[1] The simple verb is cognate with *wit* and with Lat. *videre*, to see. The sense of observing passed into that of blaming in the same way as Lat. *animadvertere*, lit. to turn the mind to, developed the sense of censuring, punishing. Ludwig (1716), who certainly had no idea that our *twit* was immediately cognate with Ger. *verweisen*, explains that verb as " to reproach, upbraid, to cast, hit, or twit in the teeth with."

Blue-stocking

There seems to be some natural connection between learned ladies and blueness, for it was in the famous " Chambre bleue " of the Hôtel de Rambouillet that Catherine de Vivonne, the queen of the " Précieuses," initiated, soon after 1600, that civilizing campaign which was repeated in London a century and a half later by Elizabeth Montagu, the queen of the *blue-stockings*. The term was soon adopted in French as *bas bleu* and in German as *blaustrumpf*. From German it passed into Danish as *blaaströmpe*.[2] In all these

[1] This is the verb used by Ulfila in Luke xviii. 3, where the Anglo-Saxon version has *wrec*, wreak.

[2] I append, pour mémoire, the following note, from Falk & Torp's Norwegisch-Dänisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, which differs altogether from the usually accepted view: " From a learned society of both sexes, originally founded at Venice under the name *della calza* (= of the hose); it came in 1590 to Paris, in 1780 to England; in Germany the word appears at the end of the 17th century." I do not know on what evidence this series of statements rests.

languages, as in English, it is depreciatory, and tends, with the attainment of sexual equality, to fall into disuse.

There seems to be general agreement as to the description having first been applied to Benjamin Stillingfleet, a frequenter of Mrs. Montagu's circle, who had discarded the black silk of fashion for the blue worsted of a blameless life. There is an early allusion to these garments in one of Mrs. Montagu's letters (1757).

A nickname of this kind is seldom given without some subsidiary reason. The *Black and Tans*, who assisted the Royal Irish Constabulary after the War, were so called from wearing khaki coats and black caps, but they would never have received the popular nickname, if there had not already existed in the neighbourhood of Limerick a famous hunt called the Black and Tan. So also *blackguard*, traditionally from the "kitchen squad" of a great man's household, e.g. "A lousy slave, that within this twenty years rode with the black guard in the Duke's carriage, 'mongst spits and dripping-pans" (Webster, The White Devil), apparently contains an allusion to some military corps as to which history is silent. In 1578 a woman was murdered in London by the *black guard*, in connection with which murder "certain soldiers" were executed. Stanyhurst, in his amazing translation of the Æneid (1582), has "Thee blackgarde marching dooth wurck, in path way, ther harvest" to render Virgil's description of the ants:

> **It nigrum campis agmen, prædamque per herbas**
> **Convectant calle angusto.**
>
> **(Æn. iv. 404.)**

Similarly the blue stockings of Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet would hardly have struck the popular fancy so much, if *blue-stocking* had not at an earlier date been contemptuously associated with mean and puritan [1] garb. It is curious that Ger. *blaustrumpf* also, before its readoption from English, had a contemptuous sense. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was applied, as still in dialect, to an informer or calumniator, from the blue stockings formerly worn by the lower officers of the law. *Der höllische blaustrumpf* is a name given by Schiller to Satan (Die Räuber, ii. 3). We may compare the London slang *bluebottle*, policeman (? obsolete), which has good Shakespearean authority. Doll Tearsheet calls the beadle "bluebottle [Folios, bluebottled] rogue" (2 Henry IV, v. 4), apparently from the colour of his garments. But why *bottle*?

Bonfire

It may be doubted whether there was ever a worse etymologist than Dr. Johnson. He was a good classic, but completely ignorant of the earlier history of the Teutonic languages. So he derived *ache* (Anglo-Sax. *acan*) from Gr. ἄχος, and thus permanently distorted its spelling (for *ake*). *Anthem* (Anglo-Sax. *antefn*, from Greco-Lat. *antiphona*) he connected with Gr. ἄνθυμνος, affirming that it "should therefore be written 'anthymn.'"

For *bonfire* Johnson gives an etymology from Fr. *bon*, good, and *fire*. This he no doubt took from the Etymologicon (1671) of Ephraim Skinner, which was

[1] *Blue* was also the traditional colour of the serving-man's livery (Taming of the Shrew, iv. 1); hence perhaps also applied to other dependents; cf. *bluegown*, almsman, *Bluecoat School*, charity school.

his chief authority for derivations. In Skinner we read "*bone-fire:* ignis festus, q.d. bonus, vel bene ominatus, ignis, Fr. un bon feu." It may be that the festive sense of *bonfire* (cf. Fr. *feu de joie*, Ger. *freudenfeuer*) has been affected by association with *bon* and *bonus*, but the older form of *bonfire* was *bone-fire* or *bane-fire*, explained by the Catholicon Anglicum (1483) as "ignis ossium."

The form *bonefire* survived into the 18th century. The practice probably goes back to heathen[1] times, and is especially associated with Midsummer Eve (cf. Ger. *Johannisfeuer*): "For the annual midsummer banefire or bonfire in the burgh of Hawick, old bones were regularly collected and stored up, down to c. 1800" (Oxford Dictionary). This must have been due to the strength of tradition, for bones do not burn particularly well. In Old French we find *feu d'os*. Hexham's Dutch Dictionary (1660) has "*bone-fire:* een been-vier, dat is, als men victorie brandt," apparently alluding to the practice of burning the dead on the won field:

> Now will the Christian miscreants[2] be glad,
> Ringing with joy their superstitious bells
> And making bonfires for my overthrow.
> But, ere I die, those foul idolaters
> Shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones.
> (Marlowe, 1 Tamburlaine the Great, iii. 3.)

In 16th-century English *bonfire* was regularly used to render Lat. *pyra* and *rogus*. Where Virgil, describing the death of Dido, has "altos conscendit furibunda

[1] The earliest authorities regard the *bone-fire* as a device against dragons: "Adversus hæc [sc. animalia] ergo hujusmodi inventum est remedium, ut videlicet rogus ex ossibus construeretur et ita fumus hujusmodi animalia fugaret" (Belithus, in Vigil. S. Joan.).

[2] Unbelievers. Old Fr. *mescreant* is the present participle of *mescreire*, to disbelieve.

rogos" (Æn. iv. 645), Stanyhurst (1582) translates "Madlye she scaleth thee top of her banefyers." Sir Thomas Browne describes cremation as a "sepulchrall bonefire." With the religious persecutions of the Reformation period *bonfire* assumed a special sense, and was often alliteratively connected with the name of Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London († 1569). With Gunpowder Plot (1605) the *bonfire* became what it is now, i.e. a blaze emblematical of commemoration, jollification and immolation combined.

Bootlegger

Chatting one day in the train with a travelled and cultured American, I asked whether there was any likelihood of the repeal or modification of "prohibition" in the United States. "Oh no, the 'bootleggers' would never allow it," was the paralysing reply. A request for elucidation of this paradox made it clear that the "bootlegging" industry, with its vast capital and princely returns, has a "pull" almost equalling that of the temperance party, and is ready to adopt, in order to keep the law on the statute-book, the same methods [1] which succeeded in placing it there. Like other great truths, quite simple when explained.

Biologists tell us that the need creates the organ, which amounts to saying that necessity is the mother of invention, and an American humorist

[1] The name *pussyfoot* is associated with these methods. This word appears to have been used in America to describe a swift and stealthy approach, before it acquired its current meaning. According to an English enthusiast, "It was an honoured name given to Mr. Johnson by the Red Indians because of his skilful and brave fight against the drink traffic in the United States." Thus is history written.

defines *bootlegging* as " what happens when an Irresistible Thirst meets an Immovable Law." It would, however, be a mistake to regard the *bootlegger* as merely a by-product of national prohibition. The Volstead Act was passed on Oct. 28, 1919, and became effective from Jan. 1, 1920. In the interval the Daily Mail (Dec. 2, 1919) was able to tell us that " the word ' bootlegger ' hails from the prairie, where they conceal bottles between the knee-boot and the leg." The *bootlegger* had, in fact, long been a valued purveyor of illicit refreshment. From Jan. 1, 1920, he became a national, instead of a merely local, institution.

The antiquity of the term has been much discussed. A gentleman writing from Little Rock, Ark., in the American Mercury (May, 1926), tells us, " The word ' bootlegger ' long antedates its use in Kansas in 1885. More than half a century ago we (then) young bloods in Kentucky used to rely on the local ' bootlegger ' for appropriate refreshments at Fourth of July picnics. The ' bootlegger ' of those happy days was not the soulless harpy of to-day. He dispensed joy at reasonable rates. Usually he sold his own corn-juice for two bits a half-pint, or sold legitimate tax-paid red ' likker ' at a slight advance over current saloon prices. In those days in old Kaintuck most of us wore knee-high boots. There is your etymology of the word. Inside his wide bootlegs your ' bootlegger ' carried his flasks of good stuff which both cheered and inebriated. Alas ! for the halcyon days ! "

Bridegroom

A curious phenomenon in the history of the English vocabulary is the complete obscurity that envelops

the origin of the words *boy* and *girl*, *lad* and *lass*. To this group of mysterious words may be added *groom*, meaning, in its earliest records (c. 1200), male child, boy. Apparently connected with it is the Old Fr. diminutive *gromet*, which, in the form *grummet*, was at one time familiar nautical English for a ship's boy, cabin-boy.[1]

The sense now usually given to *groom* was originally contextual, the word being associated in the same sentence with horses, stables, etc. More dignified functions would appear to belong to such survivors of the Lord Chamberlain's staff as the Groom of the Chamber, Groom of the Stole, etc., though the true meaning of the latter title is rather startling. Shakespeare is our first authority for *groom* in the sense of *bridegroom*. So Katharine to Petruchio :

> 'Tis like you'll prove a jolly surly [2] groom,
> That take it on you at the first so roundly.
>
> (Taming of the Shrew, iii. 2.)

The compound *bridegroom* offers a linguistic problem. The Anglo-Saxon word was *brȳdguma*, of which the second element is not *groom*, but a Common Teutonic word for man, cognate with Lat. *homo*. It survived in English, as a poetical word (*gome*), up to the 16th century. Corresponding to the Anglo-Saxon compound we find Dutch *brui(de)gom*, Ger. *bräutigam*, Old Norse *brūthgumi* (whence Dan. *brudgom*). Gothic has also the word *guma*, man, but the recorded Gothic name for *bridegroom* is *brūthfāths*, bride-lord. *Bridegroom* and *widower* [3] are the only two male titles

[1] The mutual relations of these words is uncertain. It is usually thought that our *groom* is the starting-point.

[2] In Shakespeare's time *surly* (originally *sir-ly* ; cf. *lordly*) meant imperious, despotic.

[3] Cf. Ger. *wittwer*, Dan. *enkemand*, lit. widow-man.

derived from the female, a fact to be explained by the all-importance to woman of such incidents as marriage and widowhood.

Bridegroom came into use in the 16th century, its first known record [1] being in Tyndale's version of the Bible (1525). The puzzle consists in the fact that the older *bridegome* is very rare in the 14th century and unrecorded in the 15th.[1] Where the Anglo-Saxon Gospel version has "Thā se brȳdguma ylde, thā hnappedon hig ealle and slēpon" (Matt. xxv. 5), Wyclif has "The spouse makynge dwellynge, alle nappiden and slepten." Tyndale's version is "Whyll the brydgrome taryed, all slombred and slepte." The problem is whether *bridegome* survived in the spoken language and became transformed into *bridegroom* by folk-etymology as *gome* became unintelligible, or whether it was an entirely new formation only accidentally resembling the rejected term.

Bucket-shop

The Stock Exchange, like most other corporations, has its own argot. Since the days of the South Sea Bubble a speculator for a fall has been called a *bear*. This is probably from the old proverb connected with selling the bearskin before killing the bear. Defoe writes, in Mist's Journal (1719), of "a stock-jobber who had some losing bargains of bearskins." The contrasted *bull* was adopted a little later, either by some vague zoological association [2] or with a

[1] So far as the Oxford Dictionary records go; but, as the *B* part of this great work appeared forty years ago, new evidence may have come to light in the meantime.

[2] The two animals would be associated as being the stock victims of "baiting." Bear-baiting was carried on at the *bear-garden*, which thus became typical of a scene of disorder and brutality.

suggestion of "tossing up" as opposed to "pulling down."

In more recent times the jargon of finance has been enriched from American sources. To Wall Street we owe such expressive figures as "freezing out" and "getting in on the ground-floor." *Wildcat*, used of a scheme, speculation, etc., dates from the period of "frenzied finance" in America (c. 1836). It appears first in "wildcat bank," a name originally applied to fraudulent institutions in the Western States which issued notes far beyond their ability to meet. Traditionally the notes of one of these banks bore as device a panther, locally called a *wild cat*.

The *bucket-shop*, an unauthorized office for dealing in stocks and shares, reached us from America soon after 1880. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the American *bucket-shop* was originally connected with speculating on the Chicago grain-market. The Dictionary quotes a long explanation, from the Leeds Mercury (1886), of which the gist is that, when things were slack, members of the legitimate Board used to invite unauthorized operators to ascend by the lift and do business with them. This was called "getting a bucketful." Newspaper etymology is seldom very convincing, and this explanation is unusually lacking in artistic verisimilitude. Here is another (quoted in Thornton's American Glossary), of earlier date and greater plausibility: "A 'bucket-shop' in New York is a low gin-mill or distillery, where small quantities of spirit are dispensed in pitchers and pails. When the shops dealing with one-share and five-share lots of stocks were opened, these dispensaries of smaller lots than could be got from regular dealers were at once named 'bucket-shops'" (New York Evening Post,

Oct. 1881). The same periodical remarks (April, 1909) that "Bucket-shops and wildcat promoters generally find clergymen and college professors their most unresisting prey." The imbecility of these two classes seems to be generally recognized.

Buskin

Archaic names of garments have a way of reviving. The War brought back the *jerkin* a few years after Mr. Burberry had reintroduced the *gabardine*; so it is quite possible that next winter may see the "Russian boot" eclipsed by the *buskin*. At present we only use the word with a vague reminiscence of Robin Hood or the "buskined stage."

Buskin appears c. 1500. The Oxford Dictionary suggests foreign origin, and mentions as possibly connected Old Fr. *brousequin*, Dutch *broosken*, Span. *borceguí*, It. *borzacchino*, etc. I am quite willing to believe that our *buskin* may have been influenced by one or other of these words, none of which appears to have been much used in its native language, but *buskin* has never had an *-r-*, nor is there any record of transition forms such as one would expect to find. A word may show the influence of a foreign equivalent without being derived from it, e.g. it is quite reasonable to assume that the Scottish *bootikins*, as the name of an instrument of torture, may owe something to the Fr. *brodequins*, lit. buskins, but also "bootes, filled with hoat oyle, &c. whereinto the legs being put are extreamely tormented" (Cotgrave); but no one would suggest that *bootikin* is "derived" from *brodequin*.

The earliest Oxford Dictionary record for *buskin* is from the Privy-Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York (1503), in which the word occurs several times, e.g.

"To Rutte the Quenes cordener (i.e. cordwainer, shoemaker) for shoys and buskyns."

I regard *buskin* as a corruption of *buckskin*, from the material employed. *Buckskins* are now breeches, in the 17th century they were gloves (cf. a pair of kids), in the 15th century they were buckskin boots: "My lord paied to his cordwaner for a payr bucskyns xviiid" (Howard Household Accounts, 1481–90). A *cordwainer* (cf. Fr. *cordonnier*, earlier *cordouanier*) originally worked in *cordouan*, i.e. Cordovan, a choice Spanish leather from which were made boots, shoes, and "buckskins" for the gentry. The Cordwainers are still one of the City Livery Companies. This leather was tanned from goat-skin, in which connection it may be noted that, up to the 16th century, *buck* meant goat as well as deer.

The natural transition from *buckskin* to *buskin* appears also in the surname *Buskin*, which, though uncommon, is found in the London Directory and elsewhere. *Buckskin* (or *Peildecerf*) is well recorded as a Mid. English nickname, probably from some peculiarity of costume, e.g. "Richard de Gravde, called Bokskyn" (City Letter-Books, 14th century). Walter Bukskyn, bailiff to Queen Eleanor, is mentioned several times in the Close Rolls (temp. Edward I); in the Fine Rolls he is called Walter Buskyn, an inevitable corruption.[1]

Carfax

The adjective *trivial* is from Lat. *trivialis*, "common, used or taught in high wayes, of no estimation" (Cooper), from *trivium*, the point of meeting of three

[1] Phonetically it is explained by "dissimilation," the double *-k-* sound being automatically simplified.

ways, also " where common recourse of people is " (ib.). It has probably also been affected by a contemptuous attitude towards the *trivium*, the medieval three-way curriculum, viz. grammar, logic and rhetoric. Latin also had *quadrivium*, the point of meeting of four ways, or what we should now commonly understand by the *cross-roads*.

It is quite a shock to find how recent is the latter compound. The Oxford Dictionary has no record earlier than 1812, so that apparently, in medieval times, some other term must have been used in connection with dirty work or the burial of suicides :

> A dozen men sat on his corpse,
> To find out why he died,
> And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
> With a stake in his inside.
>
> (Hood, Faithless Nellie Gray.)

This is more easily understood, if we remember that the sense we attach to *road* is no older than Shakespeare. Much earlier than *cross-roads* is *cross-way*, the lurking-place of footpads and ghosts :

> Yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
> At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
> Troop home to churchyards, damned spirits all,
> That in crossways and floods have burial.
>
> (Midsummer Night's Dream, iii. 2.)

Of equal antiquity with *cross-way* was *carfour*, borrowed from Fr. *carrefour*, which represents a Vulgar Lat. *quadrifurcum*, four-fork, substituted for the classical *quadrivium*. This was in general use up to the 18th century, the Oxford Dictionary's last record being " A sort of carfour at Chancery Lane end," from North's Examen (1734). More common was the plural form *carfoukes*, representing the Old Fr. *carrefourcs*. The London " carfuks del ledenhalle " is mentioned

in the Liber Albus (1357). At one time in general use, it gradually became obsolete. At present, so far as I know, the word is preserved only at Oxford, Exeter and Horsham. Already by the 17th century it was especially associated with the university town : " *carfax* in Oxford : quadrivium " (Littleton, 1677).

Carpet-bagger

To the Parliament of 1265, the first House of Commons in the modern sense, Simon de Montfort summoned two knights from each shire and two burgesses from each borough. Thus each county and town was represented by its own chosen local men. This conception of representative government is out of date.[1] A vacancy in Parliament is now dealt with at headquarters, and headquarters despatches to the locality bereft of its member a candidate approved by headquarters. His one absorbing interest may be Tariff Reform, Church Disestablishment, or the aspirations of the Incorporated Union of Screw-stopper-bottle-makers, and he often makes his first acquaintance with his prospective constituents when he appears " on appro " before the local committee. This type of statesman we call a *carpet-bagger*.

The term arose in the United States, whence come several other picturesque expressions especially associated with democratic politics. Such are *lobbying*, *logrolling*[2] and *stump-speaker*, though the last, so

[1] To-day (June 11, 1927) a Liberal paper makes merry over " A Wiltshire man for a Wiltshire seat " as a reactionary " slogan."

[2] The history of this word exemplifies the downhill tendency of language. It was originally used of kindly, disinterested help. When a new family made its appearance in a backwoods settlement, all the neighbours forsook their own work in order to roll logs for the new-comers' hut.

called from his utilizing as a rostrum one of the still standing tree-stumps in a newly developed settlement, is now giving way in England to the more exactly descriptive " soap-box orator."

At the end of the American Civil War (1861–5) the victorious North conferred the parliamentary vote on the emancipated negroes of the defeated South. As a consequence, in some regions, the whites were really governed by the blacks, who largely outnumbered them. The Southern whites, in self-defence, formed the famous Ku-Klux-Klan, revived in more recent times with a different object. The chance of exploiting the negro vote, and thus obtaining political office and political perquisites, attracted from the Northern States many seedy and needy adventurers, whose " property qualification " usually consisted of the contents of their carpet-bags. Such was the original *carpet-bagger*.

Castaway

As a nautical race we naturally associate *castaway* with the perils of the sea. This meaning is, however, subsidiary to the general sense of forsaken, rejected. Wyclif uses the verb to " cast away " in the literal sense, and also in the figurative: " Thi modir, which castide a wei [A.V., lothed; Vulgate, projecit] hir husband and hir sones " (Ezek. xvi. 45). Shakespeare is our first authority for the nautical sense of the verb, and in Shakespeare it is used of ships, not of sailors:

> And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,
> Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands.
>
> (King John v. 5.)

This is the only sense given in the nautical dictionaries of the 18th century. There is actually no record of *castaway*, in the sense of shipwrecked mariner, till the 19th century.

In 1525 Tyndale produced at Worms his translation of the New Testament, in which he used *castaway* of one rejected by God, e.g. in the concluding sentence of 2 Cor. xiii. 5, " Jesus Christ is in you, excepte ye be castawayes ? " Here *castaway* represents the *reprobus* of the Vulgate and the ἀδοκιμός, i.e. rejected as spurious, of the original Greek. I have no doubt that Tyndale had in mind the Ger. *verworfen*, though this is not the word used in Luther's translation. The Authorized Version, which owes so much of its majesty to Tyndale, discarded in the above passage his *castaway* in favour of the *reprobate* of the Rhemish Version, though keeping *castaway* in 1 Cor. ix. 27. The Revised Version, unmindful of the change in the sense of *reprobate*, has preserved the same reading, and in 1 Cor. ix. 27 has *rejected*. Wyclif has *reprovable* in both passages.

It is only since Cowper's terrible poem, The Castaway (1799), in which he likens his own spiritual despair to the hopeless struggle of the sailor lost overboard in mid-Atlantic, that *castaway* has come to be used of a shipwrecked mariner [1] :

> But I beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

Catchword

In 1926 Miss Rose Macaulay published an amusing essay on Catchwords and Claptrap, a subject of special

[1] And at first rather of one adrift or lost at sea than of Robinson Crusoe.

actuality at a time when "to the already sufficient imaginativeness of the politician and the journalist, the Labour members and the Labour journalists seem to add an element of sound and fury, signifying nothing, which is highly interesting to observe and analyse." The witty and gifted authoress did not feel it necessary to explain the origin of the two words, both of which come to us from stage slang, though one was originally a printer's term.

The earliest meaning of *catchword* is "the word at the corner of the page under the last, which is repeated at the top of the next page" (Johnson). All who read early printed books are familiar with this device for catching the reader's eye and helping him over the transition from page to page. From the printing-house [1] the word passed to the stage, in the sense of the final word of a speech serving as a cue [2] to the next actor. Its political use dates from about the end of the 18th century, and has always been depreciatory, which is perhaps the reason for its contemporary displacement by *slogan* (p. 145).

Claptrap is of purely theatrical origin. It is defined by Bailey (1736) as "a name given to the rant and rhimes that dramatick poets, to please the actors, let them go off with; as much as to say, a trap to catch a clap by way of applause from the spectators at a play." The present-day actor prefers to call it an effective "curtain." Politically it inspires the perspiring orator to end his peroration with a backward stagger, hand to throbbing brow. If, at the same moment, his patrician spouse is occupied in calming

[1] This 16th-century name for a Press survives in Printing-House Square, the home of The Times.

[2] Originally printed *Q*, for Lat. *quando*, when (to come in).

an excited proletarian infant, the appeal is understood to be as irresistible as similar methods proved at Eatanswill.

Theoretically *claptrap* is addressed to the gallery, the gods, or, in French parlance, the *paradis*.[1] The taste of the denizens of the gallery is contrasted by Lovelace (1646) with that of the "gentlemen of the pit." To "play the gallery," i.e. give more or less perfunctory applause, is rather older than to "play to the gallery." Both belong to the second half of the 19th century. It is curious that French has, at a somewhat earlier date, "parler à la galerie," which, though used in a similar sense, belongs to parliamentary argot. It refers to the press-gallery and its influence on the readers of parliamentary debates: "Bien souvent quand il [Lamartine] fait ses harangues à la Chambre, ce n'est pas à elle qu'il s'adresse, c'est à la galerie, c'est aux gens qui le liront demain" (Sainte-Beuve, 1846).

Cheesemonger

In determining the approximate date of a word's first appearance dictionaries use chiefly literary sources. Our early vernacular literature consists largely of poetry, drama and chronicle. The *cheesemonger* is not essentially poetic or dramatic, and it happens that no representative of the calling has ever headed a rebellion. Hence it is not surprising that the Oxford Dictionary's first record of the word dates from the 16th century. But to the authorities the *cheesemonger* was a tax-paying unit, and an examination of early Pipe Rolls reveals the name of Baldwin le Chesemangere as early as 1185–6, so that one may infer

[1] Also called *colombier*, pigeon-house, and *poulailler*, hen-roost.

the very probable existence of the compound in Anglo-Saxon.

Rome taught Europe not only the arts of war and peace, but also the tricks of trade. Lat. *mercatus*, market (from *merx*, merchandise), was adopted by all the Teutonic languages, though our English form probably came rather late and via Old French. *Merchant*, earlier *marchant*, was borrowed from French during the early Mid. English period, but long before this two colloquial Latin names for a dealer had been acquired by the Teutonic languages.

The first is *mango*, not at all a nice word. Cooper (1573) defines it as "a baude that paynteth and pampereth up boyes, women, or servauntes to make them seeme the trimmer, thereby to sell them the deerer; an horse coarser [1] that pampreth and trimmeth his horses for the same purpose." Provided with the agential suffix *-ari*, it gave Anglo-Sax. *mangere*, a merchant, now *monger*. Where Wyclif writes, "Eftsones the kyngdam of hevenes is lic to a man marchaunt, seekyng good margarytis," the Anglo-Saxon translation has "Eft is heofena rīce gelīc tham mangere, the sōhte thæt gōde meregrot" (Matt. xiii. 45).

Trade-names in *-monger* are rather numerous, and it is odd that they have not made a larger contribution to our surname list. The only one at all common is Iremonger or Ironmonger, well represented all over England. A partial explanation may be that this name represents two trades, viz. *ironmonger*, earlier also *isen-manger*, whence the variants Icemonger, Isemonger, and *eyren-monger*, egg [2]-merchant.

[1] *Horse-courser*, dealer in horses, now replaced by *horse-coper*, the second element of which is from Dutch *koopen*, to buy (v.i.).

[2] *Egg* is an Old Norse word which has supplanted the native *ey*.

At the Renaissance *-monger* fell into disrepute. It had already been used in the 13th century to form a compound expressing the most unpleasant sense of Lat. *mango*. In the 16th century it became definitely contemptuous, and since then it has been constantly used in the manufacture of new and disparaging epithets. One of the earliest of these is *massmonger*, an offensive description of a Roman Catholic. Shakespeare probably coined *newsmonger*. Prince Hal speaks of "smiling pickthanks [1] and base newsmongers" (1 Henry IV, iii. 2). *Scandal-monger* is early 18th century. Quite modern are *scare-monger*, *notoriety-monger*, *stunt-monger*, *word-monger*, etc.

The other Latin word is "*caupo*: a hucster, a taverner, a victualer, an innekeper" (Cooper), also an undesirable character, according to Horace, who describes him as "perfidus." This word was much more successful than *mango*. The latter is now widely represented in English only, while *caupo* is regarded as the foundation-stone of the whole Teutonic commercial vocabulary. In Anglo-Saxon we find *cēaþ*, trade, price, whence Mid. Eng. *good cheaþ* (cf. Fr. *bon marché*), now shortened to *cheaþ*; *cēapmon*, dealer, whence our common surname Chapman and our colloquial *chaþ*; *cēapstow*, market-place, now Chepstow; and *cēaping*, whence our numerous Chippings: "And he, gon out about the thridde hour, saw other stondynge ydil in the chepyng" (Wyclif, Matt. xx. 3). Other related words are *chaffer* (p. 89, *n.* 1) and *chop*,

[1] One who curries favour, a tale-bearer (p. 102). *Pick-* is a favourite element in disparaging compounds of this type, e.g. *pick-penny*, miser, was a medieval nickname, *pickpurse* is in Chaucer, *pick-harness*, stripper of the slain, is in Piers Plowman. *Picklock*, burglar, and *pickpocket* are both booked for the early 16th century, and are probably much older in colloquial use.

in "to chop and change" and "to chop logic," both now misunderstood.[1] The verb (cf. Ger. *kaufen*, Dutch *koopen*) is in all the Teutonic languages, with numerous derivatives, and has even penetrated into Slavonic.

It is curious that neither *mango* nor *caupo* has any descendants in the Romance languages. They appear to have been what Doctor Johnson calls "very low words," more familiar to the soldier than to the citizen, but of a form more easily picked up by the Teuton savages than longer and more polite descriptions. Old High Ger. *choufo*, now elaborated into *kaufmann*, was probably adopted not later than the 2nd century A.D. It may be conjectured that both *caupo* and *mango* were used in the Imperial armies somewhat in the sense of sutler.

Clodhopper

"The common ploughman," says Adam Smith (1776), "though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in his judgment and discretion." "Since I have worked with farm-labourers," says Sir Ian Hamilton (April 4, 1927), "I take off my hat to them every day. They are the only folk in this country who could make both ends meet on a desert island." It is characteristic of human stupidity that the one "skilled man" who is really indispensable is an object of contempt to the little street-bred people.

[1] The first means to barter, haggle. Under the influence of the accompanying *change*, it has come to imply uncertainty, etc., and has even affected the sense of *chop*, as used by sailors in reference to a change of wind. "To chop logic" is now perhaps understood as a hair-splitting exercise. It originally referred to "argument-mongering."

If a man has a grudging, surly disposition, we call him *churlish*, from *churl*, peasant, which is Anglo-Sax. *ceorl*, a free man of the lowest class. If his manners are bad we call him *boorish*. Although (*ge*)*būr*, properly a dweller in a "bower," is Anglo-Saxon, and survives in *neighbour* (from *nigh*), there is a gap in its English history. After the Conquest it gave way to the Norman term *villein*, and it was probably reintroduced in the 15th or 16th century from the cognate Dutch *boer*, still used (in the form *bor*) by an East Anglian like Ham Peggotty as a friendly mode of address. In early use *boor* was almost exclusively applied to Dutchmen and Germans. On May 19th, 1660, Pepys saw, in a "little drinking house" not far from The Hague, "many Dutch boors eating of fish in a boorish manner," no doubt a horrid sight.

If a man is awkward and unpolished, we describe him as *clownish*, from a word which originally simply meant rustic. *Clown* is of obscure origin, but certainly cognate with a number of words in the other Teutonic languages all meaning something like lump, clod. The pantomime *clown* is a blend of the comic countryman with one of the stock characters of Italian comedy.

Since the 16th century the countryman has been called a *clod*,[1] along with the elaborations *clodpate* and *clodpoll*. The 17th century [2] seems to have originated *clodhopper*, later supplied with the pleasing alternative *chawbacon*. The still earlier *bumkin*, of uncertain

[1] Cf. the similar use of the cognate Ger. *klotz*.

[2] To the same century belong the similar formations *moss-trooper*, Border bandit, and *bog-trotter*, "wild" Irishman. *Moss-troopers* are described in Blount's Law Dictionary (1691) as "a rebellious sort of malefactors in the north of England, that live by robbery and rapine; not unlike the Tories of Ireland (see p. 4, *n.* 2), the Buccaneers in Jamaica, or Banditi in Italy."

etymology,[1] is shown by the diminutive suffix to be probably of Dutch origin.

All these native names for the most useful member of the community are surpassed in opprobriousness by *villain*. The Fr. *vilain*, was, as the name implies, originally a rustic attached to a *ville*,[2] i.e. the villa or country estate of one of the "upper classes." Old French literature is full of stories illustrating the churlishness, boorishness and clownishness, in fact the villainy, of the *vilain*.[3] Cotgrave, in his Dictionary, finds room for a dozen proverbs supporting the same thesis, and his definition of the word itself is one of his choicest efforts: "*vilain:* a villaine, slave, bondman, servile tenant; hence also, a churle, carle, boore, clowne; and, a miser, micher, pinchpennie, penny-father; and, a knave, rascall, varlet, filthie fellow; any base-humored, ill-borne and worse-bred hinde, cullion, or clusterfist."

Close-quarters

From Lat. *claudere, claus-*, to shut, Old French inherited a verb *clore*, of which some fragments still survive. Its past participle *clos* became our *close*, which still means shut, closed, in *close season, close-fisted* (opposite of *open-handed*), etc. In late Mid. English it developed the sense of near, apparently via that of having all intervening spaces shut or closed. The military to "close up" is an illustration of the same idea. Similarly to "close with" (an enemy or an offer) is to obliterate a gap, literal or theoretical.

[1] It is probably from Dutch *boom*, tree, log.

[2] For the sense-development cf. our word *town*, originally an enclosure, a homestead.

[3] Cf. the French adjective *vilain*, ugly.

The contact of the two notions also appears in the fact that both *close* and *near* are used in the sense of stingy. In Shakespeare's use of *close* the original sense of "shutness" is much more fully exemplified than the derived sense of proximity. In modern English the latter sense is much the more frequent, and this fact is responsible for our altered and, strictly speaking, erroneous use of *close-quarters*.

Elizabethan sea-fights were carried on at very short range and usually ended in an attack by boarders. For defence against such an attack ships were provided with *close-fights*, defined (1627) by Captain John Smith as "small ledges of wood laid crosse one another like the grates of iron in a prisons window, betwixt the maine mast and the fore mast, and are called gratings." In this nautical "pill-box" the last stand was made. The *close-fights*, or simply *fights*, were only put up when an engagement was imminent :

> Clap on more sails ; pursue, up with your fights ;
> Give fire ; she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all !
>
> (Merry Wives, ii. 2.)

In the 18th century *close-fights* were called "*close-quarters* : cloisons fortes établies en travers d'un vaisseau, pour servir de retranchement et de défense en cas d'abordage" (Lescallier, 1777). These *cloisons*,[1] or bulkheads,[2] were loop-holed for small-arm fire : "They are used as a place of retreat, when a ship is boarded by his adversary" (Falconer, 1771).

The point is that in *close-quarters* the adjective originally meant shut, barricaded, while in the modern

[1] Fr. *cloison* is from Lat. *clausio-n-* ; cf. *cloison étanche*, water-tight bulkhead.

[2] The *bulk* of *bulkhead* is Old Norse *bālkr*, beam.

" at close quarters " we give it the secondary sense of near, with a mistaken implication as to its real signification.

Cocksure

The bird which the Americans, and some very delicate-minded English people, call a " rooster " has a reputation for sprightly arrogance, otherwise " cockiness." It is probable that the sense we now give to *cocksure* has been affected by this association. Few Englishmen have been more " cocky " than Macaulay, of whom Lord Melbourne is reported to have said, " I wish I was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay is cocksure of everything." The association is unjustified, for, while *cocky* (or *cocksy*, *coxy*) is no older than the 18th century and has always been slangy and contemptuous, *cocksure* dates back almost to the Wars of the Roses, and was originally a dignified word, referring not to the subjective consciousness of being right or knowing better than other people, but to the objective fact of security, trustworthiness, etc. The *cocksure* man of the 16th century was not dogmatically assertive; he was armoured against fate: " Whoso dwelleth under that secret thing, and help of the Lord, is cocksure for evermore " (Foxe).

If we trace the word back through the dictionaries, we find in Ash (1775) " *cocksure:* (used in droll style) confident, having no doubt "; in Johnson (1755) " confidently certain; without fear or diffidence (a word of contempt) "; in Bailey (1736) " very sure "; in Miège (1688) " qui est asseuré de son fait." Hence we may infer that the current meaning of *cocksure* dates from about the middle of the 18th

century. It may have been affected by the obsolete *cockish*, arrogant, which dropped out of use at about the same period.

Shakespeare uses *cocksure* only once, when he makes Gadshill say, " We steal as in a castle, cocksure. We have the receipt of fernseed,[1] we walk invisible " (1 Henry IV, ii. 1). Although this occurs in humorous dialogue, the sense is merely " in full security." Where Venus tells Æneas—

> Tibi reduces socios classemque relatam
> Nuntio, et in tutum versis Aquilonibus actam (Æn. i. 390)—

Stanyhurst (1582) translates: " Thou seest al cocksure, thy flete, thy coompanie salved." The evidence of the Latin-English Dictionaries, from the 17th century onward, shows that *cocksure* was equivalent to *securus, tutus*.

As it seems impossible to connect the compound with any senses of the monosyllable *cock*,[2] a bird (fig. a tap, from its shape), a heap of hay, a small boat,[3] I venture to put forward, but only as a mild conjecture, the theory that *cock* may be here an old perversion of *God*. Laws against blasphemy combined with natural reverence to eliminate the sacred name from fantastic oaths. The Frenchman substitutes *parbleu* for *par Dieu*. German has many strange compounds beginning with *Potz-*, an arbitrary perversion of *Gottes*. Ludwig (1716) gives various specimens of these " comical oathes " with such English renderings

[1] *Fernseed* was once supposed to be invisible and to confer the power of invisibility.

[2] The three main senses represent three quite distinct and unrelated words.

[3] See p. 42.

as "Gemini![1] bodikins! boblikins! udds-niggers! uddsbuddikins! gudds-bob! by cox-nouns! by cox-bones!" Several of these can be paralleled from Shakespeare, who also makes Petruchio swear "by Gog's wouns" (Taming of the Shrew, iii. 2). The substitution of *cock* for *God* is as old as Chaucer:

> See how he nappeth! see how, for cokkes [*var.* goddes] bones!
> As he wol falle fro his hors atones. (H. 9.)

Coxcomb

Mr. Wells makes merry over Kipps's first employer, who "would have considered himself the laughing stock of Wood Street if he had chanced to spell *socks* in any way but 'sox.'" But long before the era of Mr. Shalford's mercantile activities, *-x* was a recognized abbreviation[2] for *-ks* or *-cks*. We have it in *coxswain* (*cockswain*), which should more logically be written *coxwain*, or, better still, with Mr. Pepys, *coxon*: "While I was at dinner with my lord, the coxon of the vice-admiral came for me" (April 24, 1660). The accepted spelling has produced the curious verb to *cox*.

The *cockswain* was the "swain"[3] in charge of the small skiff called a *cock* (Lear, iv. 6), while the *boatswain* (*bos'n*) was responsible for keeping all the gear of the boat or ship in good condition. So Captain John

[1] This is a perversion of *jeminy, jiminy*, which is also a minced oath; like Ger. *jemine*, it is supposed to be for *Jesu Domine*. American *Gee! whiz!* belongs to the same class of euphemism.

[2] For instance, in *coax, hoax* and other words, and in such surnames as Wilcox, Maddox, the latter from the Welsh name Madoc. In the 17th century people still occasionally suffered from the *small pocks*, for which cf. *pock-pudding* (p. 121).

[3] Old Norse *sveinn*, lad, attendant. The poetical sense of conventionalized countryman or pastoral lover dates from Spenser's age.

Smith (1627): "The boteswaine is to have the charge of all the cordage, tackling and rigging of the shippe. . . . The coxswaine is to have a choyce gang to attend the skiffe, to go and come again as occasion commandeth."

The sense we now attach to *coxcomb*, as representing a blend of folly, conceit and foppery, is already in Pepys (1667). This sense is evolved from the simpler notion of fool. *Coxcomb* would be about the most unlikely epithet for a modern to apply to Othello:

> O murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool
> Do with so good a wife?
>
> (Othello, v. 2.)

In Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy, The Coxcomb (1642), the title still means simpleton,[1] what we should now call a "perfect ass" or a "chump." The original meaning of *coxcomb* was the head-dress of the professional fool, shaped to resemble a "cock's comb." In Lear, i. 4, the Fool uses it repeatedly in this sense. Figuratively it meant head. "Bloody coxcomb," for a broken head, was good English in the spacious days. Thus Fluellen, adjuring Pistol to eat the leek: "It is goot for your green wound and your ploody coxcomb" (Henry V, v. 1).

Crosspatch

A compound sometimes preserves a simple word no longer in use. The Biblical and Shakespearean *blain*, a sore, does not survive in standard English, except in *chilblain*. *Roar*,[2] disturbance, once a common word, has given way to *uproar*. Other examples are the

[1] See also Cotgrave's (1611) equivalents for *badaud* (p. 72).

[2] Quite unconnected with the "roar" of the lion. See Words Ancient and Modern, p. 138.

mail of *blackmail*[1] and the *mare* of *nightmare* (p. 106). In *crosspatch* we have a survival of the obsolete *patch*, dolt, booby, etc. The compound is first recorded in the Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700), which has "*crosspatch:* a peevish person." Like some other words now usually applied to females (*harlot, hoyden, termagant, tomboy*), *patch* and *crosspatch* were originally masculine or of common gender. *Patch* occurs eight times in Shakespeare, always applied to a male, and Scott still uses *crosspatch* as a masculine in The Heart of Midlothian.

In Shakespeare *patch* is sometimes only a vague term of contempt, as when, in the Midsummer Night's Dream (iii. 2), Puck describes Bottom and his friends as "a crew of patches, rude mechanicals," but elsewhere, as in the Tempest (iii. 2), when Caliban calls Trinculo "pied ninny" and "scurvy patch," the word is supposed to have the specific meaning of jester, from his parti-coloured clothes.

The 16th century explained *patch*, fool, from Wolsey's jester *Patch*, whose real name was Sexten. It is more likely that the jester was called *Patch*, because he was a fool, than that every fool became a *patch* because of the jester. Moreover, an earlier fool than Wolsey's bore the same sobriquet[2] (v. i.). The name may have been vaguely influenced by motley dress, but was probably, in the first place, simply a contemptuous application of the common noun *patch*. Spenser, in

[1] Words Ancient and Modern, p. 13.

[2] Probably "fools" did not often bear their family names. The first Oxford Dictionary record for *goose*, foolish person, is 1547, but "John Goose, my lord of Yorkes fole," is mentioned in 1503 (Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York) and "Nicholas dictus Gos" is in Archbishop Peckham's Letters (1279–92). *Goose* as a surname, common in Lincolnshire, must date from c. 1300 or earlier.

the character of a country lad, called himself Colin Clout. The oldest meaning of *clout*, already in Anglo-Saxon, is patch, and Spenser explains the pseudonym as chosen for its "baseness." Ger. *lump*, rogue, identical with *lumpen*, shred, rag, is another parallel.

From *patch* Spenser formed a word *patch-cock* or *patchock*, the solitary occurrence of which has greatly busied the commentators. He applies it to those English dwellers in Ireland who, having "gone native," became "as very patchcocks [*var.* patchockes] as the wild Irishe." It is usually taken to mean ragamuffin, tatterdemalion. This is probably the source of the much-discussed Shakespearean *pajock*, occurring in those lines which, as Horatio not unreasonably protested, Hamlet "might have rimed":

> For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
> This realm dismantled was
> Of Jove himself: and now reigns here
> A very, very pajock. (Hamlet, iii. 2.)

Pajock is apparently here equivalent to the "king of shreds and tatters," which is Hamlet's further description (iii. 4) of his uncle.

I venture to insert here an etymological note on *patch*, for which the Oxford Dictionary gives no indication, while other dictionaries print absurdities. It is simply a less dignified variant of *piece*, with which it can be used indifferently in practically every sense, while every existing meaning of *patch* can be rendered in modern French by *pièce*. The use of *patch* for a person is paralleled in the history of *piece*, applied both to men and women as early as the 13th century. The rustic matron still describes a pert damsel as a "saucy, forward piece."

The first record of *patch* is in Wyclif: "No man seweth a *pacche* [Tyndale, pece] of rude clothe to an old clothe" (Mark ii. 21). One could quote endless evidence to show the exact correspondence in sense of the two words.[1] Even the figurative use of to "patch up" (a quarrel) is paralleled by a 17th-century quotation in the Oxford Dictionary: "All being now piec't up between them."

The difference in form can be explained. Our spelling is artificial, the *-i-* of the French word completely disappearing from pronunciation. The Mid. English spelling was *pece*. Fr. *pièce* had a dialect variant *pieche*, which similarly became *peche* in Mid. English: "A lute clut mei lodlichen swuthe a muchel ihol peche"[2] (Ancren Riwle, p. 256, Camden ed.), and, some time before the days of Wolsey's fool, Henry VII had a jester of the same name with an earlier spelling. In the Privy Purse Expenses for 1492 occurs the item "To Peche the fole in rewarde, 6s. 8d." But the form *pacche* or *patch* was the normal result of the Old French word, just as Fr. *mèche* became Eng. *match*, and *crèche*, manger, gave *cratch*, still common in dialect and used by Wyclif in the Gospel narrative of the birth of Christ.

Dapple-grey

Most dictionaries which include "etymologies" explain *dapple* as derived from Old Norse *depill*, a spot, lit. a little pool. This theory was originated by Wedgwood, who began the publication of his Etymological Dictionary in 1857. It is accepted by Skeat, with

[1] In the medieval English-Latin dictionaries and glossaries *pece* and *pacche* are clearly synonymous words.

[2] A little clout may quickly spoil a large piece.

the remark, "As Mr. Wedgwood well observes, the resemblance of *dapple-grey* to Icel. *apalgrar*, Fr. *gris pommelé*, is accidental." From Skeat it has been copied by uncritical lexicographers. The erudition and power of weighing evidence which are supposed to belong to the etymologist are greatly helped by a little common-sense. When we note that the equivalent of *dapple-grey* in most of the European languages is, or was at some time, a compound meaning *apple-grey*,[1] it is difficult to resist the conviction that this was the original form and that it became *dapple-grey* just as *affodil* (Fr. *asphodèle*) has become *daffodil*.

The first record of *dapple-grey* is in Sir Thopas:

> His steede was al dappull-gray,
> It gooth an ambil in the way.
>
> (Chauc. B. 2074.)

In the Prologue we are told that—

> This reve sat upon a ful good stot,
> That was al pomely grey and highte Scot.
>
> (A. 615.)

It was at Boughton-under-Blean that the pilgrims were overtaken by the Canon's Yeoman, whose hackney "was al pomely grys" (G. 559). This French term (now *gris pommelé*) is more frequent than the English in the Middle Ages. *Pommelé*, dappled, is well recorded in Old French, and is applied to other animals besides horses.

The resemblance between the markings of the *dapple-grey* horse and those of the apple has, as said above, been noticed in most languages, e.g. Dan. *abildgraa*, Ger. "*apfelgrau*: apple-gray, dapple-gray" (Ludwig, 1716), Dutch "*appelgraauw*: vulgo pomaceus,

[1] Recorded, but at a later date than *dapple-grey*.

pomulatus" (Kilian, 1623), It. "*pomellato*: spotted, bespeckled, pide, dappel graie" (Florio, 1598), and Russ. *jablochnyj* (from *jabloko*, apple). Most etymologists explain this widespread description from the fact that the markings suggest little round apples. The colour which I call *dapple-grey* suggests to me, and did long before I became a humble student of etymology, the splashes of deeper colour on the skin of a ripe pippin.

The *dapple* and *dappled* beloved of poets, e.g. Milton's "dappled dawn" and "dappled shade," are evolved from the earlier *dapple-grey*, just as the verb to *beetle* is evolved from *beetle-browed* (p. 13). Similarly Fr. *pommelé* is still used of that "dapple-grey" appearance in the sky which is now associated by us with the mackerel; cf. the French proverb, "Ciel pommelé et femme fardée ne sont pas de longue durée."

Dismal

Minsheu (1617) gives what is substantially the correct origin of this word, "à Lat. *dies malus*, an evill and unhappie time." Trench, in his Select Glossary (8th ed. 1895), rather unfortunately describes this as "exactly one of those plausible etymologies which one learns after a while to reject with contempt," with the further comment, "There can be no doubt that our fathers so understood the word and that this assumed etymology often overrules their usage of it." Among the examples he quotes is one from Philemon Holland's translation of Livy: "Then began they to reason and debate about the dismal days [de diebus religiosis]."

The real origin is Old Fr. *dis*[1] *mal*, which exactly

[1] The singular *di* survives in Fr. *lundi*, *mardi*, etc.

represents Lat. *dies mali*. This is recorded in an Anglo-French Art de Kalender of the 13th century:

> Dis mal les appelent plusours,
> Ceo est a dire les mals jours.

The description *dies mali* was probably a popular substitution for earlier *dies Ægyptiaci*. These were two days in each month, variously explained as unfavourable for "blood-letting" or for initiating any journey or enterprise. The superstition was familiar to the early Fathers, and, according to Du Cange (s.v. *dies*), St. Augustine speaks of it in connection with Galatians, ch. iv.[1] These unlucky days no doubt go back to the "enchantments" of the Egyptian astrologers, but the Middle Ages naturally associated them with the Plagues of Egypt. In fact Chaucer appears to have understood the compound as the Old French form of *dix*[2] *maux*, ten evils:

> And eek, as helpe me God, withal
> I trowe hit was in the dismal
> That was the ten woundes of Egipt.
>
> (Blaunche the Duchesse, 1204.)

In Mid. English the word occurs, as in Chaucer, only in the phrase "in the dismal," to which we have now instinctively added the plural *-s*. In later English it began to be used as an adjective, but only in collocation with *day*, and the association is still evident in Spenser:

> Soone as he entred was, the dore streightway
> Did shutt, and from behind it forth there lept
> An ugly feend, more fowle then dismall day.
>
> (Faerie Queene, II. vii. 26.)

[1] Presumably in reference to iv. 10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."

[2] Fr. *dix* is a "learned" spelling of Old Fr. *dis*.

The Latin dictionaries of the 16th and early 17th centuries know no other sense of the word: "*dies atra*: a dismall, sorowfull or heavy day" (Cooper, 1573). Cotgrave (1611) uses it, with "ill lucke bringing," to render *malencontreux*, and in Shakespeare it usually still conveys a suggestion of the evil omen:

> Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,
> That nothing sung but death to us and ours;
> Now death shall stop his dismal threatening sound,
> And his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.
>
> (3 Henry VI, ii. 6.)

Folklore

From the Conquest up to about A.D. 1400 a considerable proportion of our population was bilingual, speaking both English and French. The final blending was accomplished in two different ways. Usually the English and French words survived side by side, often with some differentiation in use, if not in actual sense, e.g. *board* and *table*, *stool* and *chair*. Johnson still has "*tabler*: one who boards." Less frequently one or the other language prevailed, e.g. of our two most essential tradesmen the *baker* is pure English, the *butcher* is pure French. *Folk* and *people*[1] (Fr. *peuple*) have existed side by side for many centuries, the latter word having passed from the French-speaking part of the population to the English-speaking c. 1300. *Folk* has now become rather colloquial, and is often wrongly used in the plural, as in "the old folks," etc., a usage chiefly American. It survives also historically in such compounds as *folk-moot*, a general assembly, *folk-land*, originally common land.

In recent times many new compounds of *folk* have

[1] German has stuck to *volk*, using *pöbel* only for the rabble.

come into existence. The 16th century began to develop an interest in the past life of the nation. The first antiquary was John Leland, officially appointed antiquary to Henry VIII in 1533. The archæological interest of the 16th and 17th centuries was mostly confined to the doings and records of the great, though the craze for the pastoral exemplified by Sidney and others involved some rather artificial contact with the "people." It was in the 18th century that antiquarianism took a really popular turn. Landmarks in this movement are Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares or the Antiquities of the Common People (1725), Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry (1763), Brand's Observations on Popular Antiquities (an elaboration of Bourne, 1777), and Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the English People (1801). In all these there is no question of the word *folk*.

Herder, the great reviver of folk-literature in Germany, who was a keen student of Percy, found no German equivalent for the latter's "popular song." So he coined, in his essay on Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker (1773), the compound *volkslied*. His own great collection of specimens (1778–9) was entitled Volkslieder, for which a later editor of his works substituted the more pretentious Stimmen der Völker in Liedern. On the model of *volkslied* a number of similar compounds have been created, such as *volks-etymologie*, popular etymology, i.e. the distortion of an unfamiliar word to make it look more familiar.

The early 19th century was keenly interested in Germany, and it was possibly as a result of German influence that W. J. Thoms, the founder of our invaluable Notes and Queries, suggested, in the Athenæum (Aug. 22, 1846), that "what we in England designate

as ' popular antiquities ' might be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, ' folk-lore,' the lore of the people." This excellent coinage at once found favour, and has even been adopted in French. It has given birth to a whole family of *folk-* words, such as *folk-song*, *folk-speech*, *folk-tale*, *folk-dancing*, and is now rendered in German by *volkskunde*. There has thus been a good deal of give and take between English and German in this matter.

Earlier than Thoms's *folklore*, an enthusiastic Anglo-Saxonist had suggested (Gentleman's Magazine, June, 1830) *bird-lore*, *star-lore*, etc., as substitutes for the Greek ornithology, astronomy, etc. Some of these are occasionally used, and this humble volume might be described as dealing with *word-lore*. Ger. *-lehre* is often employed in similar compounds.

Lore is Anglo-Sax. *lār*, teaching, doctrine: "Thā se Hælend thās word ge-endode, thā wundrode thæt folc his lāre" (Matt. vii. 28). From it was formed the verb *lǣran*, to teach. *Lered*,[1] taught (*doctus*), was the regular Mid. English name for a literate, as *lewd*[2] was for an illiterate:

For be he lewed man, or ellis lered,
He noot (= wots not) how soone that he shal been afered.
(Chauc. C. 283.)

We have replaced it by *learned*, a solecism of the same type as the illiterate "I'll learn you to behave yourself."

Foxglove

"Plant out sweet williams, foxgloves and Canterbury bells. The foxgloves will do well in partial shade

[1] Cf. Ger. *gelehrt*, learned.
[2] Probably derived in some mysterious way from Lat. *laicus*.

and will grow the taller there. The name is really 'folk's'—that is, fairy's—glove, from the shape of the flowers" (Daily News, Gardening Note, March 29, 1927). This "folk's-glove" is to be classed with the hardy perennials, or, better still, with the everlastings, for nothing seems able to kill it. It belongs to that age in word-study when everything had to be explained as a "corruption" of something else, when *country-dance* was derived from Fr. *contredanse*[1] and the name Shakespeare was solemnly interpreted as coming from Jacques Pierre.

Most of the European races seem to have seen in the flower a resemblance to a thimble or finger-stall, the Latin for which is *digitale*. Accordingly the German botanist Fuchs gave the foxglove (1542) the botanical name *digitalis*. In French it is *digitale*, with which cf. It. *digitello* and Sp. *dedalera* (from *dedál*, thimble); but the popular French name is "*gantelée*: the hearbe called fox-gloves" (Cotgrave, 1611). The scientific name was suggested to Fuchs by the Ger. *fingerhut*, thimble, foxglove (lit. finger-hat), with which cf. Dutch *vingerhoed*, with the same two senses. The flower is in some English dialects called *thimble*, a name also applied both to the sea-campion and the harebell. The appropriateness of the name is evident. Another expressive dialect name for the foxglove is "bloody fingers" or "bloody man's fingers."

Early English folklore, however, usually associated the flower with the animal which is pre-eminent in legend and fable. A parallel to our *foxglove* is offered

[1] The opposite is the case. Fr. *contredanse* was borrowed from English c. 1700. The English compound is as old as Spenser: "*heydeguies*: a countrey daunce or round" (Gloss. to Shepherd's Calendar, June).

by Norw. *revbjölla*, in which *rev*, or *ræv*, means fox. The Oxford Dictionary also quotes a Norwegian form *revbjelde*, lit. fox-bell. But this parallel is not necessary, for the Anglo-Saxon and Mid. English records are quite conclusive as to the original form and meaning of the compound. In the Leechdoms (c. 1000) we find *foxes glofa*, the second word being apparently plural (our word is often listed as *foxgloves* in early dictionaries). *Foxesglove* occurs twice in a vocabulary of plant-names written down c. 1265, and in a botanical treatise[1] of the 14th century *foxglove* is glossed by *ceroteca vulpis*, the first word being for *chirotheca*, glove, from Gr. *χείρ*, hand, *θήκη*,[2] case, while *vulpis* is the genitive of Lat. *vulpes*, fox. So if *fox* is here a "corruption" of *folk's*, it must have been corrupted at a very tender age.

Frankpledge

The Anglo-Saxons had a system by which the members of a "tithing," i.e. a tenth of a "hundred," were mutual sureties for each other's behaviour. This system was called *frithborh*. It is compounded from *frith*, peace, and *borh*, pledge, surety. The first word is Common Teutonic,[3] the second is related to our verb to *borrow*, which originally meant to take on security and also has Teutonic cognates. Later forms are *fridborg*, *friborg*. The Normans took over this institution, but mistook the first element for *free*, and rendered it by *frankpledge*, from Old Fr.

[1] The Sinonima Bartholomei, ed. Mowat (Oxf. 1882).

[2] Introduced early into English this gave us (*bed*)-*tick*.

[3] Cf. Dutch *vrede*, Ger. *friede*, Old Norse *frithr* (whence Dan. *fred*); also Goth. *Frithareiks* (Frederick), prince of peace, and *gafrithōn*, to reconcile.

franc,[1] free, and *pleige*, pledge. The English form survives in the surname Freeborough.[2] Both the English and French words were used of individuals as well as of the community, taking more or less the sense of constable. Though the Oxford Dictionary does not find *frankpledge* in this sense before the 16th century, Robert le francplege is in Archbishop Gray's Register for the year 1237.

Young children and foreigners find great difficulty with initial *th-*, which often becomes *f-*. The opposite change also occurs, though less frequently. In late Mid. English the constable was called *thridborough* or *thirdborough* (a further corruption *tharborough* is used in Love's Labour's Lost, i. 1). Cowel (1637) suggests that "*thridborow* seemeth to be corruptly used for the Saxon *freobeorh*, ingenuus fide jussor," and though he is wrong about the *freo* (= free), he is no doubt right as to the initial perversion. An act of Henry VIII contains instructions for *hedbouroghes*, *thirdbouroughes*, *subconstables*, *tythingmen*, *borsalders*, all apparently meaning the same thing. To these we may add *borrowhead*, which is *headborough* reversed, both meaning the head-man of a *frankpledge*.

Borsalder, now spelt *borsholder* by historians, is Anglo-Sax. *borges aldor*,[3] chief of security. This is not recorded by the Oxford Dictionary during the Mid. English period, but, as the word crops up again in the

[1] This occurs in several old words connected with feudalism, e.g. *frank-almoin*, *frank-fee*, etc. It was also commonly used, apparently to denote high quality, in names of plants (we still have it in *frankincense*), while fine building-stone was called *franche pierre*, which we have translated as *freestone*.

[2] Similar surnames are Borrow, Shurety and Mainprice, all three of almost identical meaning.

[3] Cf. *alderman* (p. 81).

16th century, it must obviously have had a continuous existence ; in fact, Thomas le borewes-aldre is in the Charter Rolls of the 13th century.

In all of the above names that contain the Anglo-Sax. *borg, borh,* a "borrow," surety, there has been a tendency to adopt a spelling associating the compounds with *borough,* Anglo-Sax. *burg, burh,* with which they have nothing to do.

Gallipot

"The wavering apprentice has been confirmed in his desire to quit the gallipots." In these words the Blackwood reviewer delicately alludes to the fact that Keats was an apothecary's apprentice. Grose, in his Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (1785), gives "*gallipot :* a nickname for an apothecary." The earliest *gallipots* were used to contain ointments and other medicaments. Johnson's definition, "a pot painted and glazed, commonly used for medicines," is accompanied by a stupefying derivation from Sp. *gala,* finery, because a *gallipot* is a "fine, painted, pot."

The accepted 17th-century etymology was from the synonymous Dutch *gleipot.* This is repeated in the most recent dictionary I possess. It first appears in Minsheu (1617), who lifted it verbatim from the Dutch lexicographer Kilian. *Glei,* earlier also *gleye,* was supposed to mean potter's clay. It also occurs in the compounds "*gleye-backer :* plastes, figulus" (Kilian) and "*gleyers-werck :* vasa scintillantia, e scintillante sive splendente terra ; vas fictile Balearicum, Maioricanum" (ib.). The last two words really let the cat out of the bag.

Dutch *glei,* potter's earth, is a ghost-word, or rather an illegitimate inference from *gleipot,* the latter being of

much more recent date than our *gallipot*, which is found in the 15th century. *Glei* was perhaps felt to be a variant of the true Dutch word *klei*, cognate with our *clay*. It is really a common 17th-century contraction of *galei*, earlier *galeye*, a galley, just as the South African *vley*, a depression in the land, is contracted from Dutch *valei*,[1] a valley.

"Galley" was once almost a general name for vessels from the Mediterranean. Galleys that came up the Thames were moored at Galley Quay, near the Tower: "In this lane [Minchin Lane] of old dwelt divers strangers born of Genoa and those parts; they were commonly called 'galley-men,' as men that came up in the 'galleys' brought up wines and other merchandises, which they landed in Thames street, at a place called 'Galley key'; they had a certain coin of silver amongst themselves, which were halfpence of Genoa, and were called 'galley halfpence'; these halfpence were forbidden in the 13th of Henry IV" (Stow). There is also record of "galley dishes" and "galley tiles," the latter still in Johnson.

This fine porcelain was brought by galleys from the Mediterranean, and it is probable that most of it was majolica[2] from the Balearic Isles. The finest porcelain is called in Dutch *kraakporselein*, because brought in "carracks." Galleys and carracks are often coupled in early nautical documents, and probably they were both very much the same thing for the landsman.

Godfather

The conversion to Christianity of the Teutonic races involved a great increase of vocabulary. Some-

[1] This, of course, from Fr. *vallée*.

[2] *Majolica* is derived from Majorca, now Mallorca in Spanish.

times the Greco-Latin words of the missionaries were adopted, sometimes they were translated. Our *church*, Ger. *kirche*, Dutch *kerk*, Old Norse *kirka* represent a Church Gr. *κυριακόν*, from *Κύριος*, Lord. This must have originated among the Goths,[1] and have come up the Danube before the 5th century. It was brought to Britain by the Anglo-Saxons. But the ideas represented by Deus and *Θεός*, Dominus and *Κύριος*, were rendered by the existing Teutonic words, e.g. Eng. *God*, Ger. *Gott* (originally neuter nouns, pointing to polytheism), Eng. *Lord*, Ger. *Herr*. *Easter* (cf. Ger. *Ostern*) is the name of a heathen festival adapted to Christian use.

On the whole English offered much more resistance to the foreign words than did the other Teutonic languages, e.g. while Old High German made *πεντηκοστή*, fiftieth (day), into *Pfingsten*, in English the Greek word was, after a time, rejected in favour of the native compound *White-Sunday*,[2] from the white garments worn by candidates for baptism on that day. The Anglo-Saxons rendered *evangelium*, Gr. *εὐαγγέλιον*, good tidings, by *gōdspell*, the first syllable of which at once became, by folk-etymology, *gŏd-*, as though "divine tidings." This passed into the languages of the Continental Teutons who were evangelized from England, but was soon replaced by derivatives of *evangelium*, e.g. Dutch *evangelie*.

Wyclif and later translators introduced many Greco-Latin words, so that we now have *parable*, *centurion*, *disciple*, *scribe*, *Pharisee*, *congregation*,

1 The Western missionaries used *ecclesia*, whence the names for church in the Romance languages. This was also adopted by the converted Britons, and survives in the place-name *Eccles*.

2 Now *Whit-Sunday*, whence, by wrong separation (as though *Whitsun Day*), the ghost-words *Whitsun* and *Whitsuntide*.

resurrection, etc., where the Anglo-Saxon Gospels have *bīspell* (cf. Ger. *beispiel*, example), *hundredmann*, *leornungcniht* (learning knight), *bōcere* (booker), *sundorhālga* (separate holy), *gesamnung* (from *samnian*, to collect), *ærist*, etc.; but *gospel* has persisted. Perhaps the two most generally diffused of all the Church words are *angel* (Gr. ἄγγελος, messenger) and *devil* (Gr. διάβολος, slanderer), though Anglo-Saxon also rendered *angel* by *ærendgāst* (errand ghost) and Wyclif commonly has *fend* for *devil*.

In the sense of sponsor Church Latin used *patrinus* and *matrina*, whence Old Fr. *parin*, *marine*, now altered to *parrain*, *marraine*. German adopted *pate* from Lat. *pater* (*spiritualis*), whence also Dutch *peet*, but Anglo-Saxon preferred the vague translation *godfæder* (*-modor*, *-sunu*, *-dohtor*). The same formation is found in the Scandinavian languages and in Flemish, and it is very probable that it existed in Old High German, for we find Old High Ger. *gota*, godmother (still surviving as dialect *gote*), which was no doubt the pet form of an unrecorded *gotmuoter*.

For those who contracted spiritual affinity by acting as fellow-sponsors Church Latin had the names *compater*, *commater*, whence Fr. *compère*, *commère*,[1] now used in the sense of gossip, crony: "*Commere*: a she-gossip, or godmother; a gomme"[2] (Cotgrave, 1611). The Latin words were rendered in Anglo-Saxon by *godsibb*, from *sibb*, relationship (*sib*, akin, is still current in Scottish), now *gossip*, a word used by Shakespeare for a sponsor, a crony, and a tatler. The German rendering of *compater* was *gevatter*, which

[1] Hence Scotch and Northern Eng. *cummer*, *kimmer*, gossip, crony.

[2] For *gommer*, contraction of *godmother*; cf. Swed. *gumma*.

has had very much the same sense-history as *gossip*.

In current use *gevatter* and *gevatterin* correspond pretty well to our *gaffer* and obsolescent *gammer*. It is uncertain whether these words represent *grandfather, grandmother*, or *godfather, godmother*. The vowel points to the former, the absence of *-r-* to the latter, and the problem is further complicated by the existence of dialect *goffer* and *gommer* used of grandparents. It would appear that the two relationships have got completely mixed up in these familiar contractions. The parallel history of Fr. *compère* and Ger. *gevatter* favours the *godfather* origin of *gaffer*. This is also supported by the use of Swed. *gubbe*, gaffer, *gumma*, gammer, which are pet forms of *gufader, gumoder*, godfather, godmother, from Old Norse *guthfathir, guthmōthir*.

Godsend

When Tom Lockart, after kicking Badalia to death,[1] was "took for a common drunk," Jenny's anxiety was expressed in the words, "Gawd send they don't look at 'is boots!" It is from the very common and ancient optative "God send . . .!" that the noun *godsend* has been evolved, or rather, has been altered from its older and logical form. I do not know of any other compound noun containing a verb in the subjunctive, though such formations are not uncommon as surnames, e.g. Godbehere or the German name Gotthelf.

Godsend is not older than the 19th century, and is first recorded as Kentish for a shipwreck![2] It is

[1] In Mr. Kipling's Record of Badalia Herodsfoot.

[2] See also Scott's Pirate, ch. 6.

for an earlier *God's send*, altered, under the influence of the verb *send*, from the Mid. Eng. *Goddes sond*. The latter word is Anglo-Sax. *sand*, thing sent, corresponding to the verb *sendan*. Its oldest sense is an allowance of food, a mess,[1] but usually it means message. In Mid. English it was spelt *sonde*, and was especially used of what is sent by God. In the Shipman's Tale, which, for good and sufficient reasons, is usually omitted from the academic syllabus, the merchant's wife, "of excellent beautee," but "revelous," thus addresses her husband :

> "What, sire, how longe wol ye faste ?
> How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
> Youre sommes and youre bookes and youre thynges ?
> The devel have part on all swyche rekenynges !
> Ye have ynough, pardee, of Goddes sonde ;
> Com down to-day and lat youre bagges stonde."
>
> (Chauc. B. 1405.)

Grass-widow

From the days of the Matron of Ephesus down to those of Mr. Weller's "second wentur," the widow has been the subject of much ill-natured criticism, and her title has been decorated with ironical additions. In 18th-century French a lady whose husband was absent in the East was sometimes called a "veuve de Malabar."[2] In the fifties of the 19th century New York had many "California widows," whose husbands had joined the gold-rush. "Golf-widow" is a 20th-century witticism modelled on the Anglo-Indian *grass-widow*. The latter came into use, apparently after the Mutiny, to describe "ladies recreating in the hill-

[1] This is Old Fr. *mes* (now *mets*), past participle of *mettre*, to put, from Lat. *mittere*, to send.

[2] Originally the title of a tragedy by Lemierre (1770).

stations, while their husbands are at their duties in the plains" (Hobson-Jobson). Though the name is often used "with a shade of malignity" (ib.), the Anglo-Indian *grass-widow* has, except for the playful allusion to her forsaken condition, no connection in meaning with the 16th-century *grass-widow*, who was an improper person.

A *grass-widow* was, according to the Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700), "one that pretends to be married, but never was, yet has children." In this disreputable sense it is still used in dialect, and is well documented, also in the sense of discarded mistress, from the 16th century onward. The first Oxford Dictionary record is from Sir Thomas More (1528). There is a gap between its disappearance from polite English at the end of the 18th century and its Anglo-Indian revival in a less objectionable sense.

The type of etymologist who explains *Welsh rabbit* as "Welsh rarebit"[1] and turns *ketchup* into *catsup* has tried to work his wicked will on *grass-widow*, which he proclaims to be a corruption of "grace-widow." The parallel continental forms show that *grass* is the original form, though it is doubtful whether it is connected with turning out to grass or with grass as the bed of the outcast. Heywood (1546) ends the account of a conjugal disagreement with the lines:

> At end of that fray asunder they go,
> And never after came together againe—
> He turnd her out at doores to grase on the plaine.
> (Proverbs ii. 10),

[1] This first appears in Grose (1785). *Welsh rabbit* (for which Mrs. Glasse has *Scotch rabbit*) is much older. Cf. such fanciful names as Bombay duck (a fish), Dutch oyster, Scotch woodcock, angels on horseback, etc.

the last line being apparently a recognized proverbial expression used in such context. The Old French phrase *laisser sur le vert*, to abandon, may have had a similar origin.

The equivalent continental terms usually have simply the meaning of deserted wife, though sometimes with an implied reflection on the lady's morals. In connection with Ger. *strohwittwe*, lit. straw-widow, not found before the 18th century, some lines from Faust are always quoted. These are spoken by the deserted Marthe, who has been left "on the straw":

> **Gott verzeih's meinem lieben mann,**
> **Er hat an mir nicht wohl getan!**
> **Geht da stracks in die welt hinein**
> **Und lässt mich auf dem stroh allein.**[1]
>
> (Faust, i. 2865.)

In Danish we find *græs-enke* (*enke* = widow), now used in the modern sense of *grass-widow*, but earlier of a widow whose husband had been hanged, while Swed. *gras-anka*, wife whose husband is absent, has, in dialect, also an opprobrious sense. These words are both translated from archaic Low Ger. *gras-wedewe*. The corresponding Dutch word is *gras-weduwe*, for which we find also earlier *haeck-weduwe*, explained by Kilian (1623) as "mulier mariti absentis adventum avide affectans, q.d. vidua expectans sive appetens avide." This definition associates the *grass-widow* with *haecken* (now *haaken*), to desire, lit. to hook. The analogy of the other languages suggests that she is more likely to be connected with an obsolete *haeck* which

[1] **God forgive my dear husband,**
He has not behaved well to me!
Goes straightway out into the world
And leaves me alone on the straw.

Kilian explains as " meta fœni," i.e. a haycock. *Hæck-weduwe* is also recorded in a Dutch-Latin Dictionary of 1587, i.e. not much later than our *grass-widow*.

From all this it is clear that the lady in whom we are interested has to do, not with grace, but with grass, or, alternatively, with straw or hay. To the suggestions already offered for the reason of the name may be added the statement in Falk & Torp that, in some districts of Germany, brides who have anticipated conjugal life are obliged at their nuptials to replace the floral wreath by one of straw. This may, however, be rather a result of the name than its cause. Finally, we may mention the practice, alluded to in Faust, of strewing *häckerling*, i.e. chopped straw, before the doors of the unchaste :

> Das kränzel reissen die buben ihr,
> Und häckerling streuen wir vor die tür ![1]
>
> (Faust, i. 3575.)

Helpmeet

Mr. Wells, in the second part of The World of William Clissold (p. 514), opines that, in consequence of modern man's nomadic existence as a temporary dweller in hotels, service-flats, etc., " the woman who was once his helpmeet is becoming once more his camp-follower." *Helpmeet*, which is not a word at all, is often used by quite educated writers. The proposal of marriage made to Jane Eyre by the appalling St. John Rivers was couched in the enticing terms, " Jane, come with me to India : come as my helpmeet and fellow-labourer." The Oxford Dictionary gives examples of its use from the 17th

[1] The lads will tear off her wreath
And we will strew chaff before the door.

century onward, the first record being from Dryden, who ought to have known better. The 18th century introduced the variant *helpmate*, which, at any rate, makes some sort of sense.

In the book of Genesis (ii. 18) we read in the Vulgate, "Dixit quoque Dominus Deus: Non est bonum esse hominem solum: Faciamus ei adjutorium simile sibi." The reading of the Septuagint is, *Καὶ εἶπε κύριος ὁ θεός, οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον· ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κατ' αὐτόν.* Wyclif translates, "Make we to hym help like hym," and, in the 1388 version, "an help lijk to hym silf." Coverdale (1535) has "an helpe, to beare him company," for which the compilers of the Authorized Version (1611) substitute "an helpe meet for him." *Help-meet*, improperly hyphened, was taken to be a compound noun, and popular ignorance did the rest. It is noteworthy that the dictionaries ignored this absurdity till about half-way through the 19th century. The 20th-century proof-corrector might very well blacklist it.

Hide-bound

I suppose all words call up vague or subconscious pictures in the mind. When, as a boy, I came across the epithet *hide-bound*, usually applied to conservatives or conservative ideas, it suggested to me some hazy process in book-binding and an indistinct vision of massive tomes recording the prejudices of the past. It is really one of the numerous rustic metaphors from the days when man lived a natural and sensible life. A Dictionarium Rusticum, Urbanicum et Botanicum of 1717 has "*hide-bound*: a distemper in horses, when the skin sticks so fast to their back and ribs that you cannot pull it from the flesh with your hand. . . . In

husbandry, trees are likewise said to be hide-bound, when the bark sticks too close." Beasts and trees thus afflicted are hindered in their development or adaptation. Both the literal and the figurative senses are recorded in Tudor authors.

The modern denouncer is seldom satisfied with one adjective. He prefers rather to speak of " hide-bound officials of the case-hardened armour-plate type " (Sunday Times, July, 1917). *Case-hardened* is sometimes used in its literal sense of toughened, especially in speaking of iron converted superficially into steel; but it is usually figurative, and felt as more or less equivalent to *hide-bound*. The Oxford Dictionary refers it to *case*, in the general sense of covering, outer integument, etc. It seems possible that it has to do rather with the special sense of skin or hide of an animal, which *case* had in the 16th century. From this sense sprang the verb to *case*, i.e. to skin, e.g. " We'll make you some sport with the fox, ere we case him " (All's Well that Ends Well, iii. 6). Mrs. Glasse, who published, in 1746, The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy, and who did *not* write, " First catch your hare,"[1] *did* write, " Take your hare when it is cased," which may have originated the legend. According to the English Dialect Dictionary people still speak in the north of " casing " rabbits, etc., and there is a clear association between *case-hardened* and skin in Mr. Bonnycastle's account of his early educational experiences: " Eventually I cared nothing for a flogging. I had become case-hardened " (Midshipman Easy, ch. 5).

[1] The Home Secretary (Feb. 2, 1927): " I think the answer is to be found in the old proverb that you must first catch your hare before you can cook it " (Laughter).

Somewhat similar is the idea conveyed by *hard-bitten*. Mr. Kipling describes somewhere the high military value of a regiment of "hard-bitten Irish ruffians." The epithet is properly applied to the hero of a hundred dog-fights, toughened by innumerable bites: "They will be hard-bitten terriers will worry Dandie" (Guy Mannering, ch. 53).

High-flown

It is inevitable that *high-flown* should be associated with *high-flying*. The Oxford Dictionary even defines it as "soaring high, elevated, elated," and derives it from *flown*, the past participle of *fly*. This view, which classes *high-flown* with such illogical adjectives as *outspoken* (for *outspeaking*), is, in my opinion, quite erroneous. The original meaning of *high-flown* was not elevated, hyperbolical, but swollen, bombastic, or what is called by the mysterious American name *high-falutin'*.

The two ideas are akin, but not identical. When, during the progress of a labour dispute, a lady Member of Parliament calls the Cabinet ministers a set of "brass-faced baby-killers," and a gentleman Member of Parliament describes the Government as "the most brutal and murderous in the whole of history," we recognize hyperbole or exaggeration, i.e. heaping up, not quite the same thing as turgidity, though sometimes borrowing its aid, as in the following rhapsody, in which an American publisher expresses his conviction that a contemporary novelist really is the goods: "Romancer, soldier, poet, gallant sportsman, great artist and great man, a Donn Byrne is born to bless this drab world of ours with his bold, colourful, high-

hearted stories once in a hundred years. A nobler Byron, a more musical Dumas, a more vital Meredith, a swifter moving Scott—here he is, Donn Byrne!"[1]

The purely *high-flown* style is better represented by the following extract from a Yorkshire paper (1919): "They recognized it wasn't frothy turgid rhetoric which had been served up to them for years, it was the dynamite of facts, booming like a minute gun, awakening the dormant mental splendours of those imaginative industrious sons of toil, revealing to them the sophistical cogwheels of political vote-catching chicanery."

The elevated or "high-flying" style is called in French "le style élevé," the *high-flown* style is "le style ampoulé"—"*un discours ampoulé:* a high-flown discourse" (Miège, 1688). This is derived from Lat. "*ampulla:* a pot with a hollow belly; anything blown or puft up; *ampullæ*, pl., big words, strong lines, high-flown stuff" (Littleton, 1678). The Latin adjectives for *high-flown* were *tumidus* and *turgidus*, both meaning swollen:

> Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
> To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
> (Byron, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.)

The corresponding German words are *aufgeblasen*, blown up, and *schwülstig*, from *schwellen*, to swell: "*eine schwülstige rede oder schreibart:* a high strain; a bombast,[2] a tumid, high, high-flown, high-strained,

[1] In case the reader should be inclined to adopt towards this specimen of "blurb" the incredulous attitude of the Irishman on first seeing a giraffe, I may say that it is taken verbatim from an advertisement in the American Mercury (May, 1926). Another American publisher, whose advertisement I have noticed, expresses himself more simply: "Wake up, you would-be intellectuals, and strain your throats in demand for the genius of all the ages."

[2] Originally cotton stuffing.

bombastick, swelling, swoln or swollen, speech or stile" (Ludwig, 1716). The evidence of the early dictionaries is conclusive as to *high-flown* meaning swollen, not lofty, though the natural association with "flying" begins to appear in the 18th century, e.g. Johnson gives for it the two meanings, "elevated" and "turgid," while he defines "high-flying" as "extravagant in claims or opinions," which is quite a different thing.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that the *flown* of *high-flown* is from *flow*, used in Mid. English of the swelling of a river, a sense surviving into the 17th century. It is especially common in the past participle: "Firste we come to Torrens Cedron, which in somer tyme is drye, and in wynter, and specyally in Lent, it is mervaylously flowen with rage of water" (Pilgrimage of Sir Richard Guylforde, 1506). Milton's "Sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine" (Par. L. i. 501) were not "elevated," except in the modern slang sense of that word; they were what in America is called "full"; cf. "The young gentleman is come in, Madam, very high flowne, but not so drunke as to forget your promise" (Brome, A Mad Couple Well Matched, iii. 2, c. 1640).

Hodge-podge

In compounds formed by reduplication only one element as a rule needs to be explained. *Pell-mell* is Fr. *pêle-mêle*, of which the first syllable is a meaningless rime on the second, from *mêler*, to mix. In such formations *p*- is a favourite sound, e.g. *roly-poly*, from *roll*, Peggy from Margaret, and Polly from Mary, of which a Mid. English corruption was Mally (later

Molly). *Hodge-podge* looks like a compound of this type, but its appearance is deceptive, and the whole word has a well documented and curious history.

We understand by *hodge-podge* a heterogeneous mixture, edible or otherwise. Phillips (1658) defines it as "a hachee, or flesh cut to pieces and sodden together with herbs," but the general sense of jumble is, so far as documentary record goes, much older than the culinary. An earlier form was *hodge-potch*, e.g. Cooper (1573) explains Lat. *farrago* as a *hodgepoche*. This is for a still earlier *hotch-potch*, and it would appear that the first syllable, having no meaning to an English ear, was assimilated to the popular name Hodge[1] and the second was later rimed on it.

Hotch-potch likewise is recorded in the sense of miscellaneous collection long before it crops up as a kitchen word. It is a corruption of the original *hotch-pot*, the second syllable having been instinctively altered to rime with the first: "Ye han not knowe the wil of youre trewe freendes, olde and wise, but ye han cast alle hire wordes in an hochepot [*var.* hoche poche] and enclyned youre herte to the moore[2] partie and to the gretter nombre" (Chauc. B. 2446). Thus the formal history of the compound is chronologically *hotch-pot, hotch-potch, hodge-potch, hodge-podge*.

Hotch-pot is from Fr. "*hochepot*: a hotch-pot or gallimaufrey; a confused mingle-mangle of divers things jumbled or put together" (Cotgrave, 1611). It is spelt *hospot* in Old French texts belonging to the north-eastern region, and is probably of Dutch origin;

[1] Assimilation to common personal names is one of the chief methods of folk-etymology; cf. rustic *Aaron lily* and *Polly Andrews* (*polyanthus*).

[2] This sense of *more* (= bigger) survives in "More fool, you!"

cf. Dutch "*hutspot*: dish of meat or hodgpotch, made of beef, mutton, parsnips or carrots" (Hexham, 1678). This is from "*hutsen*: to shake som thing in a hat, as lots or counters" (ib.), and, although Fr. *hochepot* seems, from the 13th century onward, to have always been culinary, the "handicap" [1] association is by far the older in English. Already in Anglo-French of the 13th century *hoche-pot* is a recognized legal term. At the death of parents, those children who were already married and dowered could only inherit on condition of restoring their shares to the common estate, as a preliminary to an equal division all round. This was called, in the Anglo-French of Littleton's Tenures, "mitter lour teres donés en hotchpot." In France the same system was called "rapport de mariage."

Although for each form of the word the "mingle-mangle" sense precedes the comestible, it does not follow that the latter is not the original. If a kitchen metaphor were early adopted as a term of law, it would stand a much better chance of getting formally recorded in the legal sense. Littleton is inclined to start from the edible *hotch-pot*: "And it seemeth that this word is in English a pudding, for in this pudding is not commonly put one thing alone, but one thing with other things together. And therefore it behoveth in this case to put the lands given in frankmarriage with the other lands in hotchpot" (Tenures, iii. 1, transl. of 1671).

Hoity-toity

There is a dialect verb to *hoit*, to play the tomboy. It is of unknown origin, but is evidently associated in

[1] For *hand-in-cap*, originally a kind of lottery game. See Pepys, Sept. 19, 1660.

sense with *hoyden*. The latter, now only used of a rough girl, originally meant a fool or an awkward rustic: "*badault* [mod. *badaud*]: a foole, dolt, sot, fop, asse, coxcombe; gaping hoydon" (Cotgrave, 1611). It is dubiously identified with Dutch *heiden*, heathen, gipsy.

I think it not impossible that *hoit* may really be a back-formation from *hoyden*. Earlier than *hoit* we find *hoiting*, used as an adjective in such 17th-century collocations as "hoiting gambols," "hoiting girl," where the epithet is plainly interchangeable with *hoyden*. In the 17th and 18th centuries even the "upper classes" often said and wrote *kitching*[1] for *kitchen*, *garding*[1] for *garden*, etc., so that, were it not for the *-t-*, it would be reasonable to take *hoiting* for a corrupted form of *hoyden* and assume that the mysterious verb had been evolved from it after the same fashion as *maffick* from *mafficking*.[2] However that may be, the 17th-century *hoity-toity*, also *highty-tighty*, the second syllable of which is a meaningless reduplication,[3] was a tomboy: "*hightetity*: a ramp (= romp) or rude girl" (Dictionary of the Canting Crew, c. 1700).

How this name for a hoyden came to be an interjection expressing a kind of surprised displeasure is

[1] Cf. *fingering*, a kind of wool, earlier *fingram*, which is Fr. *fin grain* (like *grogram* from *gros grain*); also *chamfer*, a back-formation from *chamfering*, which is a corruption of Old Fr. "*chanfrain*: a chanfering; or, a channell, furrow, hollow gutter, or streake, in stone-worke, etc." (Cotgrave). This is from Old Fr. *chanfraindre*, to break (*fraindre*) the edge (*chant*).

[2] Mafeking, besieged by the Boers, was relieved May 7, 1900.

[3] On this point see *hodge-podge* (p. 69). In such formations sometimes the vowel is varied, as in *mingle-mangle*, or in *shilly-shally*, from *shall I?* More often rime is employed, as in *helter-skelter*, *razzle-dazzle*, etc.

not clear, but this new sense appears also before 1700. Mrs. Gamp, as we should expect, selected the *-i-* form, when she had occasion to rebuke that "worittin' wex-agious creetur," Mr. Chuffey: "Why, highty tighty, sir, is these your manners?" (Martin Chuzzlewit, ch. 46), but *hoity-toity* is the prevailing form. It is still occasionally used in the country, but tends, like most good words, to wither in the chill blast of education.

Hoity-toity replaced a much more expressive and fascinating interjection. In circumstances in which Mrs. Gamp would have used *highty-tighty*, Juliet's nurse says, "Marry come up, I trow" (Romeo and Juliet, ii. 5), and I doubt whether any phrase in English has been more fantastically evolved. The name of the Holy Virgin was used in Mid. English as a strengthening expletive:

> "Ye" (= yea), quod the preest, "ye, sire, and wol ye so? Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertely."
>
> (Chauc. G. 1061.)

The Elizabethans used the word profusely, but, probably as a disguise [1] to the oath, made it into *Marry*. As a further concession to laws against blasphemy, the name of St. Mary the Egyptian, *Mary Gipsy*, was often substituted for the unaccompanied name of the Virgin. This was shortened into *Marry gip*,[2] very common in the 17th century. Another *gip* is recorded from the 16th century as an adjuration (= *gee up*) to the unwilling horse. As the real meaning of *Marry gip* became hazy, the exclamation was wrongly asso-

[1] See p. 41.

[2] Cf. the dog-name *Gip*, also supposed to be shortened from *Gipsy*.

ciated with the coachman's *gip*, and finally the imprecatory *Marry gip* was replaced by the meaningless *Marry come up.*

Homesick

It is doubtful whether the ancients had any poetic conception of home. Ulysses and Ovid both disliked the toils and discomforts of exile, but neither Greek nor Latin has any word expressive of that longing for home, which, like the love of natural scenery, is an essentially modern aspect of human feeling. According to Aristophanes, *Πατρὶς γάρ ἔστι πᾶσ' ἵν' ἄν πράττῃ τίς εὖ* (Plutus, v. 1151), which Cicero renders, "Patria est, ubicumque est bene" (Tusculan Disputations, v. 37, 108). The same is true of the old Teutons. Ger. *elend*, misery, lit. exile, reflects the feelings of the banished man, but neither in Old High German nor in Anglo-Saxon is there any word at all corresponding to *homesickness*, which did not come into English use till the end of the 18th century.

It was in May 1798 that Coleridge, while in Germany, wrote a poem called Homesick, in which occurs the line "Homesickness is a wasting pang." It was suggested to him by Ger. *heimweh*,[1] lit. home-woe, the poetical use of which in Germany is not much anterior to Coleridge's poem. It is almost as rare to find a 19th-century German poet who has not written a poem with the title Heimweh, as to find one of the 18th century who has. In its earliest occurrences in poetic German *heimweh* always has specific reference to Switzerland, to the longing of the exiled mountaineer for his Alpine home, or the tears shed by the Swiss

[1] Also translated into French (c. 1700) as *mal* (or *maladie*) *du pays*.

mercenary on hearing the "ranz des vaches" or "kuhreigen":

> Zu Strassburg auf der schanz,
> Da ging mein trauern an.
> Das Alphorn hört' ich drüben wohl anstimmen.
> Ins vaterland musst' ich hinüber schwimmen[1] . . .

This famous *volkslied* appeared in its present form in Des Knaben Wunderhorn, compiled (1805) by Arnim and Brentano. It violently introduces the Swiss *heimweh* motif (with the soldier at Strasbourg hearing the Alphorn in Switzerland!), in place of the much more prosaic original:

> Da wollt' ich den Franzosen desertieren,
> Und wollt' es bei den Preussen probieren.[2]

Perhaps the most beautiful of all *heimweh* songs is Mignon's, in Wilhelm Meister, "Kennst du das land, wo die citronen blüh'n?" This was written in 1784, but, though Goethe was already familiar with the word *heimweh*, it was for him a Swiss provincialism of rather prosaic meaning, quite unsuited for dignified lyric. Even the Swiss poet Haller, writing at Leyden in 1726, entitled his *heimweh* poem Sehnsucht nach dem Vaterlande, avoiding, as it were, the native term so familiar to him. Early occurrences in German prose usually relate to "das sogenannte Schweizer-heimweh," the so-called Swiss homesickness.

The origin of the word is prosaic. It is known that mountaineers are affected in health by being transplanted to the plain. This seems to have been espec-

[1] At Strasbourg on the ramparts my sorrow began. I heard the Alphorn played yonder. I had to swim across to the fatherland . . .

[2] I wanted to desert the French and make a trial of the Prussian service.

ially the case with the Swiss, though we have equally early records of *heimweh* as attacking men from the Bavarian Highlands. The first mentions of the word are in purely medical literature, and the learned term *nostalgia*, from Gr. *νόστος*, return home, is of equal antiquity. Both make almost their first appearance in print in the title of a work published in 1678 by J. J. Horder, a doctor at Basel: "Dissertatio Medica de *Νοσταλγία* oder Heimwehe oder Heimsucht." As late as c. 1790 Casanova writes, "J'étais atteint de ce qu'on appelle 'nostalgie' et que les Suisses et les Allemands appellent 'heimweh,' mal de chez soi, mal du pays. Pour les Suisses le 'heimweh' est une maladie mortelle, une véritable peste, qui les emporte vite, si l'on ne se hâte de les rendre à leurs pénates."

To sum up, "Our word was not created by love of nature, it is not the expression of a contemplative yearning, awakened or intensified by long deprivation. It came into German from the medical literature of Switzerland as the name of a Swiss malady. Neither Mignon nor Iphigenia could use the dialect word. Schiller and Hölderlin avoid it entirely. Wherever it occurs in German literature of the 18th century, it bears the stamp of its alien origin. Only after Mignon had given voice to her deep sorrow in the deepest of all *heimweh*-songs, did *heimweh* begin to appear as the motif of lyric poetry outside Switzerland" (Kluge,[1] Wortforschung und Wortgeschichte, p. 75).

[1] Friedrich Kluge, one of the greatest of philologists and most lovable of men, ended, in June 1926, a life which, though darkened by total blindness for its last twenty-five years, has seldom been equalled in erudite achievement. In him were united vast learning, the kindliest sympathy with humbler workers in the same field, and a complete absence of that pettiness which is the besetting snare of the second-rate scholar.

Honeymoon

The newly wed are apt to appear somewhat comic, or tragic, to those who realize the inevitability of the " waning " of the *honeymoon*. The first lexicographer to note our word is Minsheu (1617) : " *honie-moone* : applied to those that love well at the first, and not so well afterwards, but will change as doth the moone." So also Blount (1656) : " *hony-moon :* applied to those marryed persons that love well at first and decline in affection afterwards : it is hony now, but it will change as the moon." Miège (1688) is cruder : " When a couple are newly married, the first month is all honey moon or smick smack, the second is hither and thither, the third is thwick-thwack, and the fourth, the Devil take them that brought thee and I together." The 18th century is more optimistic, or, at any rate, non-committal, e.g. Johnson's definition is " the first month after marriage, when there is nothing but tenderness and pleasure."

The Oxford Dictionary tells us that the compound had originally " no reference to the period of a month, but compared the mutual affection of newly married persons to the changing moon, which is no sooner full than it begins to wane." Though this view is supported by the earliest examples, this is probably only due to the innate cussedness of human nature, for the corresponding expressions in other languages point distinctly to a period of time. Fr. *lune de miel* and It. *luna di miele* appear to be of much more recent formation than *honeymoon*, and are possibly translated from the English word.

Apparently much older than the English term is Old Norse *hjūnōttsmānathr*, lit. wedding-night-month.

German has *flitterwochen*, lit. tinsel weeks, recorded from the early 16th century. *Flitter* is explained by a German lexicographer (1616) as "ornamentum capitis," and an 18th-century authority states that brides wore their spangled wedding-caps and fal-lals for a certain period after marriage. Others connect *flitterwochen* with Mid. High Ger. *flitern*, to caress. In South Germany *küssmonat*, kiss month, was usual. It occurs (1669) in the famous realistic novel Simplicissimus. Most homely of all is Dutch *wittebroodsweken*, lit. white-bread-weeks, suggesting the peasant couple's respite from toil and frugality. This is rather oddly amplified in Sewel's Dutch Dictionary (1766): "*honeymoon:* wittebroods week, de eerste maand na dat men getrouwd is, als men nog geen zak zout met malkanderen gegeeten heeft," i.e. the first month after people are married, when they have still not eaten a sack of salt together. The connection between salt and long intercourse is old in Dutch, and goes back to the classics. It is referred to by Aristotle and Plutarch; cf. also "Verum id est quod vulgo dicitur multos modos salis simul edendos esse, ut amicitiæ munus expletum sit" (Cicero, De Amicitia, xix. 67).

Houseleek

Nothing could be more commonplace than the collocation of these two prosaic monosyllables, and yet the compound contains a bit of prehistoric folklore. Although not recorded in Anglo-Saxon, *houseleek* probably existed in that language as *hūs-lēac*, since we find the same compound in the other Teutonic languages, e.g. Dutch *huislook*, Ger. *hauslauch* (Old High Ger. *hūslouch*), Old Norse *hūslaukr* (whence forms in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish). Its scientific name

is *sempervivum tectorum*, because it grows especially on roofs, and it grows on roofs because our remote ancestors carefully put it there.

The word *leek* must originally have had a wider connotation than at present, for we can hardly imagine that all our *Leightons* (there are twelve in the Gazetteer) represent original enclosures in which only one vegetable was cultivated. The Anglo-Sax. *lēac-tūn*, leek-town, was a kitchen garden, and *leek* is applied to many plants [1] besides the elongated onion which Fluellen compelled Pistol to eat.

The first record of *houseleek* is in the Promptorium Parvulorum (1440), where it is explained by *barba Jovis*, which corresponds to its French name "*joubarbe*: houseleeke, sengreene,[2] aygreene, bullocks-eye, Jupiters beard" (Cotgrave, 1611). It is called *barbajou* in Provençal and *barba di Giove* in Italian. Its common Anglo-Saxon name was *thunor-wyrt*, thunder-wort, with which cf. Ger. *donnerbart*, lit. thunder-beard. The explanation of all these names is that the primitive European planted the *houseleek* on his roof, because he believed in its efficacy as a lightning-conductor.

Husbandman

It is probable that no one ever did more to arouse an intelligent interest in word-history than Archbishop

[1] Cf. Anglo-Sax. *gār-lēac*, garlic, lit. spear-leek, Mid. Eng. *clove-leek*, idem, also Ger. *knoblauch*, garlic (by dissimilation for Mid. High Ger. *klobelouch*), *schnittlauch*, chives; possibly also Eng. *charlock*, wild mustard.

[2] This name, with which cf. Ger. *sinngrün*, preserves an obsolete Teutonic prefix cognate with Lat. *semper*. It also survives, perverted by folk-etymology (Ger, *sünde* = sin), in Ger. *sündflut*, the Flood.

Trench. His two books, On the Study of Words (1851) and English Past and Present (1855), were the first attempts to make the dry bones of philology live. He was a man of great learning and wide reading, but necessarily handicapped by the rudimentary state of philological knowledge in his day. He was, moreover, somewhat too ready to accept etymologies which furnished opportunities for improving the occasion: "And other words there are, having reference to the family and the relations of family life, which are not less full of teaching, which each may serve to remind of some duty. For example, 'husband' is properly 'house-band,' the band and bond of the house, who shall bind and hold it together. Thus, old Tusser, in his Points of Husbandry:

> "The name of the 'husband' what is it to say?
> Of wife and of household the band and the stay."

The second syllable of *husband* is not *band*, a tie, but *bond*, a dweller, a word introduced from Old Norse,[1] and originally the present participle of a verb meaning to dwell. It is ultimately related to Ger. *bauer*, a peasant. The Anglo-Sax. *hūsbōnda* was not necessarily either a married man or a farmer, but simply a householder, the master of the house. It is probably this sense of the word that survives in the surname *Younghusband*. The word early assumed the sense of tiller, and, in some regions, corresponded to the

[1] The Old Norse word is *bondi*, earlier *buondi*, from *bua*, to dwell, a verb found in the other Teutonic languages, gradually assuming the sense of cultivating, building. *Bonde* still exists in Danish and Swedish, and is often contemptuous, like our *churl*, etc. (see p. 37). *Bondage*, originally the tenure of land by a *bond*, or farmer, early acquired, partly by association with *bond*, a fetter, the sense of servitude.

villein,[1] or servile tenant. The sense in which *husband* is now most familiar appears in early Mid. English.

Our curious trick of turning a noun into a verb gave us the verb to *husband*, to manage. The oldest meaning of *husbandry* was the administration of a household (cf. *housewifery*), corresponding to Gr. *οἰκονομία*. When Tusser wrote (1557) his Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandrie, he was thinking, not only of agriculture, at which, like some other theorists, he had been a failure, but of the economic management of a household. On December 5, 1667, Pepys sent his father six pairs of his old shoes, "not for want, but for good husbandry."

Mid. English elaborated *husband* into *husbandman* (cf. *fisherman*, *merchantman*, etc.), with the double sense of householder, farmer. The Oxford Dictionary records it from c. 1330, but it must be much older, for in the Patent Rolls for 1225–32 occurs the name of John Husebundeman. A word must have a long life before it becomes an official description, so it is possible that *husbandman* really existed in late Anglo-Saxon. In Wyclif *husbandman* is used in the "master of the house" sense, e.g. "Gif the housbonde man [Vulgate *paterfamilias*,[2] Gr. *οἰκοδεσπότης*] wiste in what houre the theef were to comme, trewly he shulde wake" (Matt. xxiv. 43), while, in the parable of the vineyard, it is a *husbondman* [Vulgate *paterfamilias*, Gr. *οἰκοδεσπότης*] who plants the vineyard and lets it to "erthe tiliers" [Vulgate *agricolæ*, Gr. *γεωργοί*].

[1] See *villain* (p. 38).

[2] The Anglo-Saxon version has *hīredes ealdor*, in which the first word means family, household (the corresponding Ger. *heirat* now means marriage), and the second (= chief, prince) is a derivative of *eald*, old, still surviving in *alderman*.

In Tyndale (Matt. xxi. 33) it is a *housholder* who lets the vineyard to *husbandmen*.

Most people, if suddenly asked for the masculine of "wife," would reply "husband." Strictly speaking, the correct answer would be "man" (cf. the corresponding Fr. *homme*, Ger. *mann*, and our "man and wife"). The feminine of *husband* is *housewife*, Anglo-Sax. *hūswīf*,[1] which has had a curious history. Colloquially it became *hussif*,[2] *hussy*. As late as the 18th century a "good hussy" meant an economical manager, but, being often used vituperatively, preceded by such adjectives as "light," "saucy," "skittish," "impudent," etc., the word gradually absorbed such adjectives into itself. The full form *housewife* was also used in the same way up to the early 18th century, e.g. "impudent housewife" occurs in Vanbrugh's Confederacy (v. 2).

With *hussy* for *housewife* we may compare *goody* for *goodwife*: "What's the matter with his leg, goody?" (Farquhar, The Beaux' Stratagem, iv. 1). This was once the regular name for a woman whose station did not entitle her to be called "mistress," and, within the memory of those now living, was still applied to old countrywomen. Falstaff addresses Mrs. Quickly as *goodwife* (Merry Wives, ii. 2), but always says "Mistress Ford."

The Authorized Version adopts Tyndale's "good man off the housse" for Wyclif's *husbandman* (Matt. xxiv. 43). By the Elizabethans *goodman*[3] and *good-*

[1] Not actually recorded till early Mid. English.

[2] With the use of this word for a pocket sewing-case, cf. Fr. *châtelaine*, chain to which keys, sewing-case, etc., are suspended, lit. lady of the castle.

[3] Cf. Fr. *bonhomme*, used especially in the appelation Jacques Bonhomme, the personification of the French peasant, and *bonne femme*, rustic matron.

wife were used with some tinge of condescension. In Shakespeare *goodman* is often contemptuous: "Come hither, goodman baldpate. Do you know me?" (Measure for Measure, v.), but in Scottish both *gudeman* and *gudewife* have preserved a quiet dignity.

Ironside

Most of our kings and princes bear historic nicknames. Some of these nicknames are the inventions of chroniclers who lived centuries after their supposed bearers, or the imaginations of modern poets and romancers. The epithet "sine terra" is found applied to John before he came to the throne. Edward I is described by Langtoft as "od le lunge jambes," the barbarous Anglo-French equivalent of "with the longe shonkes," which occurs in a political song on the execution of Sir Simon Frazer (1306). So we may assume that John and Edward I were really known to their contemporaries as Lackland (or Sansterre) and Longshanks.

On the other hand, the Black Prince, who died in 1376, is first so called by the 16th-century chroniclers Grafton and Holinshed. They may have reduced oral tradition to writing, or one of them may have invented the name. The same applies to non-royal figures, e.g. there is almost contemporary evidence for Harry Hotspur, but Warwick is first called the Kingmaker in Daniel's Civill Warres (1599). Bluff King Hal is one of Scott's numerous contributions to historical phraseology:

> That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
> More, Sands and Denny passed the joke;
> That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
> And Catherine's hand the stocking threw.
>
> (Marmion, vi. 38.)

Walpole, in 1762, had written of Henry VIII's "bluff haughtiness," giving to *bluff* its then accepted sense of "surly, blustering" (Johnson), so that Scott here, as in many other cases, has actually brought about a change in the meaning of a word.

Among the pre-Conquest kings four are especially well known to us by nicknames, viz. Alfred the Great, Ethelred the Unready, Edmund Ironside, and Edward the Confessor. The first of these names is obviously the verdict of posterity. The second is a corruption, first found in Stow (1580), of the epithet *unrede*, applied to Ethelred († 1016) in a text of the early 13th century. Anglo-Sax. *unrǣd* is an abstract noun,[1] the opposite of *rǣd*, counsel, wisdom. The archaic *rede* survives historically in the name Richard the Redeless, given to Richard II in Langland's poem. The title of Edward the Confessor, first found in William of Malmesbury (c. 1140), is perhaps generally misunderstood. Confessor is not used here in the sense of priest, but in the old Church sense of one who avows his creed in the face of persecution, without actually suffering martyrdom.

This leaves us Edmund Ironside, whose nickname is recorded in the same text as that of Ethelred. *Ironside*, a natural epithet for a strong and formidable man, was a familiar Mid. English nickname. John Irenside was a freeman of York in 1335. The surname still exists, and there are thirteen Ironsides in the London Telephone Directory.

The compound is most familiar to us in its application to the Cromwellian troopers. It calls up the

[1] The early use of abstract nouns as nicknames has resulted in many still existing surnames (Counsell, Charity, Pride, Luck, etc.). See my Surnames, pp. 216–224.

picture of a grim Puritan dragoon, iron of countenance and garb. As early as 1667 the name was explained from the Cromwellians' " head-pieces, back and breast plates of iron." No doubt this helped, but it is not the real truth. The epithet was originally [1] applied to Cromwell himself and by the Royalists. The Oxford Dictionary quotes, from the Mercurius Civicus, Sept. 1644, " Lieutenant-General Cromwell, alias ' Ironside,' for that title was given him by Prince Rupert after his defeat near York " (i.e. at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644). According to S. Rawson Gardiner, " It was at Pontefract (Aug. 1648) that Cromwell's men were first called by the nickname of ' Ironsides,' a term which had hitherto been appropriated to himself."

The nickname *redcoat*, regularly applied to the British soldier [2] before the khaki age, was also given by the Royalists to the Parliamentary troops. Finally the slang use of *lobster* [3] for a *redcoat*, now understood as alluding to his colour, started with the application of this name to Sir Arthur Hazelrigg's regiment of dragoons, " so prodigiously armed that they were called by the other side ' lobsters,' because of their bright iron shells with which they were covered " (Clarendon, History of the Great Rebellion).

Jackanapes

In my Romance of Words (p. 41) I suggested that the origin of this odd-looking compound may be

[1] I.e. in connection with the Civil War. *Ironside* was, as already noted, in earlier use in the general sense of a tough customer.

[2] *Bluejacket* is comparatively modern (Marryat). The Tudor word was *tarpaulin*.

[3] Sir Robert Peel's policemen (Bobby Peelers) were called by the mob " raw lobsters," from their blue uniforms.

"Jack of Naples." I do not know that any fresh light has been thrown on the problem in recent years, but it may be of interest to summarize what is known about the word. It is first recorded in political lampoons assailing the unpopular William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who was murdered at sea in 1450 (2 Henry VI, iv. 1). His badge was a clog and chain such as were attached to a tame monkey.

In Political Poems and Songs, vol. 2, edited by Wright for the Rolls Series (1861), he is the subject of three metrical attacks. The first, a song on the popular discontent at the disasters in France, refers to all the leading men of the day by their heraldic badges, to which the writer of the manuscript has appended their names. The allusions are clear to anyone who is acquainted with this episode of English history:

The Rote [Bedforde] is ded, the Swanne [Gloucetter] is goone,
  The firy Cressett [Excetter] hath lost his lyght;
Therfore Inglond may make gret mone,
  Were not the helpe of Godde almyght.
The Castelle [Roone] is wonne where care begowne,
  The Portecolys [Somerset] is leyde adowne;
Iclosid we have oure Welevette Hatte [Cardinall],
  That keveryd us from mony stormys browne.
The White Lion [Northfolke] is leyde to slepe,
  Thorough the envy of the Ape Clogge [Southfolk];
And he is bounden that oure dore shuld kepe,
  That is Talbott oure goode dogge.

The second deals with Suffolk's arrest:

Jack Napys, with his clogge,
Hath tied Talbot oure gentille dogge,
Wherfore Beamownt,[1] that gentille rache,[2]
Hath brought Jack Napis in an eville cache.

[1] Lord Beaumont, High Constable of England.
[2] Sleuth-hound.

The third is on the death of Suffolk :

In the monethe of May, when gresse groweth grene,
Flagrant in her floures, with swete savour,
Jac Napes wolde one the see a maryner to ben,
With his cloge and his cheyn, to seke more tresour.
Suyche a payn prikkede hym, he asked a confessour.
Nicolas[1] said, " I am redi thi confessour to be."
He was holden so that he ne passede that hour.
For Jac Napes soule *Placebo*[2] and *Dirige*.[3]

The last line recurs, with slight variations, at the end of each of the nine stanzas.

From this it is clear (1) that Jack Napes was the nickname of William de la Pole, (2) that, for the name to have had any significance, it must already have been familiar English for a captive monkey, though it is not actually recorded in this more general sense till seventy years later. This is one more example of the fact that our nicknames and surnames often carry back the history of the words from which they are formed far beyond dictionary records[4] drawn from literary sources. From the early 16th century onward there is abundant documentary evidence for *jackanapes*, a monkey. If we had gramophone records of 14th-century conversation, we should probably find that it was equally familiar to that age.

That *jackanapes* has long been felt as containing

[1] The ship that stopped Suffolk in the Channel.

[2] The first word in the antiphon (Ps. cxvi. 9) at Vespers in the Office for the Dead.

[3] The first word in the antiphon (Ps. v. 8) at Matins in the Office for the Dead. Hence *dirge*.

[4] This applies especially to compounds used in outspoken descriptions, e.g. *fathead*, first recorded by the Oxford Dictionary for 1842, was actually a surname in 1220, for John ffathevit is in the Cockersand Cartulary for that year. Similarly *pennyfather*, a niggard, first recorded in the 16th century, was a common 13th-century nickname, survining in the surname Pennefather.

the word *ape* is obvious. For the *n-* of *napes*, the Oxford Dictionary compares Ned, Noll, etc., and for the final *-s* such surnames as Jacks, Hobbs, etc. This is not very convincing. If *ape* were the original element of the word and recognized as such, it is hardly likely that it could have been arbitrarily altered in this way. Proper names regularly have fantastic variations played on them, common nouns hardly ever. There is no record of what would have been the normal form, viz. *Jack ape* (cf. *jackass*), and, although *jackanape* is also found, it does not occur before Shakespeare, who introduces it into the broken English of Dr. Caius: "By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page" (Merry Wives, ii. 3).

We know that tame apes[1] and marmosets were common medieval pets. We also know that exotic animals were frequently named, not from the countries of their origin, but from places with which they were vaguely associated. The *turkey* is a North-American bird, the *guinea-pig* was named from the *Guineamen*, or slave-ships, which brought it from Brazil (cf. *galli-pot*), the *bantam*, which is a Japanese bird, bears the name of a place in Java, and so on.

What was in the Middle Ages the immediate source of supply of tame monkeys? In our own day it is Italy, though the Italian organ-grinder and his companion seem of late to have vanished from our streets. In the 15th century it was also Italy. In 1436 a patriotic Englishman wrote a Libel (= little book) of English Policy, the burden of which is:

> Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe thamyralté,
> That we be maysters of the narowe see.

[1] *Ape* is Anglo-Saxon. *Monkey* does not appear till the 16th century.

One passage deals with luxury imports ("thynges of complacence") brought from Italy:

> The grete galees of Venees and Fflorence
> Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,
> Alle spicerye and of grocers ware,
> Wyth swete wynes, alle manere of chaffare,[1]
> Apes and japes and marmusettes taylede. . . .[2]

I am aware that Venice is not Naples, but, on the other hand, Florence is not a seaport. It seems quite possible that apes and marmosets, not to mention "japes," brought from Italy may have been associated with so well-known a port as Naples, and that "Jack of Naples" may thus have become a regular name for a captive monkey. This would become *Jackanapes* as inevitably as fustian of Naples (? made at Naples) became *fustian-anapes*, a material frequently mentioned in the 16th century: "*tripe de velours:* velure, mock velvet, fustian an apes" (Cotgrave, 1611).

Jolly-boat

If schoolboys still read Marryat, which it is to be hoped they do, they cannot but be intrigued by the names of the ship's boats as manned for "cutting-out" expeditions. In the 18th century, according to Falconer's Marine Dictionary (1771), merchant-ships seldom had more than two, viz. a *long-boat* and *yawl*.

[1] Merchandise. Now hardly used except as a verb (*chaffer*) meaning to haggle. It is Mid. Eng. *cheap-fare*, commerce, from an unrecorded Anglo-Sax. *cēap-faru*, trading-journey (cf. *warfare*, p. 179). The corresponding Old Norse *kaupför* is recorded in the original sense; cf. also Ger. *kauffahrteischiff*, merchant-ship. See p. 35.

[2] This poem has recently been reprinted by the Oxford Press. The text here quoted is from Wright's Political Poems (v.s.).

In addition to these a man-of-war had, according to the same authority, the *barge*, "employed to carry the principal sea-officers and very unfit for sea," the *pinnace* and the *cutter*. The *long-boat* was later replaced by the *launch*. The captain's *gig* seems to date from c. 1800. It is not mentioned by the nautical dictionaries of the 18th century.

Some of these names are rather mysterious. *Launch* looks simple, but has probably nothing to do with the verb to *launch*. It comes from Sp. *lancha*, which is supposed to be a Malay word. *Pinnace* is of quite uncertain origin. As a *clipper* is a ship that "clips," it might be supposed that a *cutter* is a boat that "cuts," but it is much more probably a sailor's perversion of *catur*, a word from the Malabar coast which is recorded in English long before we find any mention of the *cutter*. Another boat name from the East is *dinghy*, which is Bengali.

Sailors excel all other people in the gift of perverting words from their original forms. If they call a kind of craft a *jolly-boat*, it is a reasonable inference that it has nothing to do with the word *jolly*, and at least dubious whether it is even, etymologically, a *boat*. Most dictionaries unhesitatingly derive the *jolly* from Dan. *jolle*, a small boat, a word of Low German origin found also in Swedish (*julle*) and Dutch (*jol*). This is very unlikely. In all these languages the initial *j*- has the sound of our *y*-. Sailors do not take their foreign words from dictionaries: they pick them up by ear in foreign ports. Dan. *jolle* or Dutch *jol* was duly adopted by nautical English in the 17th century, and became our *yawl*, just as it became Fr. *yole*.[1]

[1] Formerly called *iole de Norvège*.

It is suggested in Hobson-Jobson that *jolly-boat* is a corruption, via the form *jolywat*, of *gallevat*, a word now obsolete, but well recorded in nautical English from c. 1600.

If the sailor can convert the ship-name *Superb* into *soup-tub*, or make Fr. *langouste*, a kind of crab, into *long oyster*, the substitution of *jolly-boat* for *jolywat* would obviously be well within his powers. It is even possible that the older name was shortened to *jolly*, and that the explanatory *boat* was added later. The fact that *jolly-boat* is absent from the nautical dictionaries of the 18th century rather suggests that, though current among sailors, it was not recognized by the official vocabulary.

The Tudor warship, like the 18th-century merchantman, carried few boats. We find mention in Naval Accounts, 1495–7, of " the Soveraigne with her grete bote and jollywatt," apparently corresponding to the long-boat and yawl [1] of later days (v.s). The Oxford Dictionary quotes, from Purchas (1613), " As soone as I anchored, I sent Master Spooner and Samuell Squire in my gellywatte to sound the depths within the sands." In the Travels of Peter Mundy (1634) a somewhat similar job is given to the *jolly-boat*: " Having tryed the currant sundrie tymes with our jolly boate." Earlier still, in the relation of the last voyage of Drake and Hawkins (1595), we find the simple *jolly*: " That day the Pegasus jolly was going on shore for water, carying no guarde. The Spaniards perceiving it came downe upon them." These examples, suggesting the identity of the *jolly* or *jolly-boat* with the *jolywat*, are much older than those given by the Oxford

[1] There was also the *cock* (see *coxswain*, p. 42), intermediate in size between the *great boat* and the *jolywat*.

Dictionary,[1] in which the earliest quotations are *jolly-boat* from Chambers's Cyclopædia (1727–41) and *jolly* from Marryat.

Whether the *jolywat* is identical with the *gallevat*, which is taken to be an Eastern corruption of Port. *galeota*, a diminutive of *galea*, a galley, is a matter of dispute. The initial consonant is an obvious difficulty. The Oxford Dictionary further objects that the *gallevat* was equipped with sails, had forty or fifty rowers, and carried guns. This does not seem a serious objection. Names of craft have always been very vaguely used. The *frigate*, another mysterious word, was, for the Elizabethan sailors, a rowing-boat. Most of the boat names occurring in this article are, or have been, used both of small craft and larger vessels, and the *galley-punt* of the Deal fisherman is neither a *galley* nor a *punt*.

Kidnap

Carlyle, in his Oliver Cromwell, makes use of the verb to *barbadoes*, which, under the Commonwealth, meant to transport convicts as plantation slaves to Barbados. The great Oliver sent a particularly large consignment after the massacre at Drogheda. These unfortunates were later known as "twenty-pounders," from the usual price at which they were bought by the planters (see Stevenson, Kidnapped, ch. 5). There were also unofficial sources of supply, the chief collecting centres being London and Bristol, where the agents were known, as early as 1645, as "spirits." Little-

[1] For the earliest see Maclehose's reprint of Hakluyt, x. 241. Peter Mundy's Travels (ed. Temple) was not available when the editors of the Oxford Dictionary were occupied with *J*.

ton's Latin Dictionary (1677) has "*plagiarius*[1]: a man-stealer, a spirit, who steals other mens children or servants; *per synecd.* he who steals or filches out of other mens writings." Hence our verb to *spirit away*, which was earlier simply to *spirit*. In 1674 was issued a Royal Proclamation against "the frequent abuses of a lewd sort of people called 'spirits' in seducing many of H.M. subjects to go on shipboard, where they have been seized and carried by force to H.M. plantations in America." Of about the same date as *spirit* is the verb to *trepan*, earlier *trapan*, originally a name in rogue's slang for a decoy, and probably connected with *trap*.

Both *spirit* and *trepan* were soon supplanted in favour by a new verb. In 1693 Increase Mather wrote of "a servant who was spirited or kidnapt (as they call it) into America," and Bunyan uses *kidnap* in The Pilgrim's Progress. The earliest record is in Phillips's New World of Words: "*kidknappers*: those that make a trade of decoying and spiriting away young children to ship them for foreign plantations." Such children were known in North America as *kids*. During the 18th century *kidnap* retained this special sense. Slavery in North America was the fate intended by his uncle for David Balfour, and is the motif of many other adventure stories.

Although *kidnap* was used in 1925 of the temporary "spiriting away" of an adult communist, we still associate the word especially with children. *Kid*, a child, was originally "low slang," according to the Oxford Dictionary, which identifies it with *kid*, a young goat. As our "low slang" is largely of German and Flemish origin, I am inclined to think that the

[1] From Lat. *plaga*, a net.

Dutch and German word *kind*,[1] child, has something to do with it. The second element is the "low slang" *nap*, to snatch, now replaced by *nab*. The Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700) explains "nap the wiper" by "steal the handkerchief." *Nap* is probably of Scandinavian origin; cf. Dan. *nappe*, to snatch. That *kidnapping* was an essentially English industry is clear from the evidence of the early dictionaries, e.g. "*kinderdiebe in England:* plagiaries, spirits or kidnappers; people that would kidnap or spirit away children in England; people that drive a trade of children, inticing 'em away to sell 'em, in order to be transported to the plantations in America" (Ludwig, 1716).

Legerdemain

The Oxford Dictionary derives this synonym of "sleight of hand" from Fr. *léger de main*, light of hand. So also Skeat. This etymology overlooks the serious objection that *legerdemain* is a noun only, and has never existed as such in French. Moreover, though Fr. *léger de main* means light of touch, it does not appear ever to have been used in connection with conjuring. If it had been so used, its Mid. English equivalent would rather have been "sly of hand" than "sleight of hand," for *sleight* is the abstract noun from *sly*, which, before its degeneration, meant skilful, sagacious: "Therfor be ye sligh as serpentis and symple as dowves" (Wyclif, Matt. x. 16).

Sleight is in Chaucer a general term for adroitness,

[1] Cf. *kinchin*, from the German dim. *kindchen*: "'The kinchins, my dear,' said Fagin, 'is the young children that's sent on errands by their mothers, with sixpences and shillings; and the lay is just to take their money away'" (Oliver Twist, ch. 42).

dexterity, occurring also in such compounds as " sleight of heart," " sleight of wit," while " sleight of hand " is found side by side with *legerdemain* from the early 15th century onward. The simple *sleight* was also used of a trick or knack :

> So did the villaine to her prate and play,
> And many pleasant trickes before her show,
> To turne her eyes from his intent away :
> For he in slights and jugling feates did flow,
> And of legier demayne the mysteries did know.
>
> (Faerie Queene, V. ix. 13.)

The spelling *slight* for *sleight* is recorded in the 14th century, and I suggest that *legerdemain* came into existence as a mistranslation of " slight of hand," by a vague confusion with the unrelated adjective *slight*, of which the regular French equivalent is *léger*. Such mistranslations were not uncommon during the bilingual age in England; cf. *manner* (p. 130), *frankpledge* (p. 54).

Lion-hunter

At Oxford and Cambridge, up to the time of Mr. Verdant Green, titled undergraduates, " gentlemen commoners," were distinguished from the untitled by a gold tassel, or " tuft," attached to their caps. The word *tuft* [1] thus became a nickname for these privileged young men, and their sycophants or toadies [2] were called *tuft-hunters*.

I imagine that it was on the model of *tuft-hunter*,

[1] *Tuft* is for older *tuff*, from Fr. *touffe* (Old Fr. *toffe*). It is probable that the earlier form survives in the slang word *toff*.

[2] *Toady* is for *toad-eater*, originally the conjuror's zany, who amused the crowd by pretending to swallow toads, snakes, etc. Fr. *avaleur de couleuvres*, snake-swallower, has the same literal and figurative senses.

connoting social snobbishness, that the 19th century coined *lion-hunter* to describe a special type of female snob, the kind of hostess who is in despair if unable to exhibit to her friends the latest celebrity or stunt-monger.

The Oxford Dictionary's first record for *lion-hunter* is from Carlyle (1840), who uses it in connection with the unfortunate lionizing [1] of Burns ; but it must have been in colloquial use at an earlier date, judging from the name (1837) of Mrs. Leo Hunter,[2] at whose fancy-dress *fête champêtre* the Pickwickians appeared, Mr. Tupman wearing that " green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail " that so nearly led to a pugilistic encounter with Mr. Pickwick.

The " lion " pursued by the *lion-hunter* is, according to Thackeray, " a man or woman one must have at one's parties." This sense dates from c. 1700. At an earlier period the " lions " were, as they still are, the remarkable buildings, curious objects, etc., of any locality. Originally they were the royal lions[3] kept at the Tower of London. These animals were naturally regarded as likely to amaze and interest the country cousin, and were usually the first London sight exhibited to him. As early as the 16th century " to have seen the lions " implied being no raw novice, but a person quite " up to snuff." In the time of Pepys the Tower lions were still a spectacle of sur-

[1] According to Tree, the actor, the only man unspoilt by lionizing was Daniel.

[2] For the identity of this lady see Miss Hesselgrave's Lady Miller and the Batheaston Literary Circle (Oxford, 1927).

[3] Lions seem to have been very usual presents to potentates. On Jan. 11, 1681–2, Evelyn saw the audience given by Their Majesties to the ambassadors of Morocco : " Their presents were lions and ostriches,"

passing interest : " I took them and all my ladys to the Tower and showed them the lions and all that was to be shown " (May 3, 1662).

Livelong

In some London circles the correct response to an invitation to refresh is, " I don't mind if I do," a formula considered more dignified than the too eager " Yes, please." In the rural Midlands a common alternative, till lately, was, " Aye, I'd as lief." *Lief* is still in general rustic use all over England, and survives in a corrupted form in America :

> Sez Isrel, " Keep it tell it's tender ;
> 'Tain't wuth a snap afore it's ripe."
> Sez Joe, " I'd jest ez lives eat tripe."
> (Lowell, The Two Gunners.)

This is the commonest construction of the word, though on the Border it still has, or had in the 19th century, its original adjectival sense of dear, beloved, contrasting with *loath* as the cognate Ger. *lieb* does with *leid*, e.g. " *Er muss und soll es thun, es mag ihm lieb oder leid seyn :* he shall and must do it, will he nill [1] he " (Ludwig, 1716). In Chaucer *lefe* alternates with *dear* as an epithet expressing affection. The adjective, which is cognate with *love*, is found in all the Teutonic languages. It survives in the archaic *leman*, now only used of a female paramour,[2] but, in its older form *leofmon*, dear man, applied to a legitimate lover of either sex, and, in Mid. English devotional poetry,

[1] This archaic verb, found in Anglo-Saxon, is formed from *will* prefixed by the general Aryan negative *ne*. With our *willy-nilly* cf. Lat. *nolens-volens*.

[2] From the Old Fr. *aimer par amour*, to love sexually.

to the Saviour and the Virgin. *Leesome*, for *lief-some*, with which cf. *winsome*, is still good Scots :

> The tender heart o' leesome luve
> The gowd and siller canna buy.
> (Burns, The Country Lassie.)

Another survival of this good old word is in the compound *livelong*, practically only used with " day " and " night." This is now felt and pronounced as connected with *life*, and, in fact, modern English often twists it into *lifelong* and changes its meaning accordingly. The older form is *lefe long*, in which the first adjective is used intensively, somewhat as the vulgar still speak of " the whole blessed day." Cf. Ger. " *den lieben ganzen tag :* the whole liblong day " (Ludwig, 1716), more usually *den lieben langen tag* (or *die liebe lange nacht*). The Scottish form is *leelang*. It would appear that the compound began to be misunderstood in 17th-century English, for Milton certainly analysed it as " lifelong " :

> Thou in our wonder and astonishment
> Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
> (On Shakespeare, 1630.)

Loggerhead

At the foot of Moel Famma, between Ruthin and Mold, lies a famous inn known as The Loggerheads.[1]

[1] The sign also existed till lately in Nottingham, where The Loggerheads (in Narrow Marsh), mentioned in 1733, was once the haunt of a local " fence " known as " Tobias," who had dealings with Dick Turpin. The landlord at the time was Lanky Dobbs and the landlady Bouncing Bella. Altogether, quite a Beggar's Opera collection.

The sign, painted by Richard Wilson († 1782), shows two faces, with the legend, "We three Loggerheads be," an example of that native wit of ours which Charles Reade describes as "light and playful as a tap of the old English quarterstaff."

This illustrates the original sense of the word, which was equivalent to blockhead. Petruchio addresses his servants as "loggerheaded and unpolished grooms" (Taming of the Shrew, iv. 1), and the noun *loggerhead* is used elsewhere by Shakespeare. It is an elaboration of earlier *log-head*, like 17th-century *jolter-head* for 16th-century *jolt-head*,[1] or *chuckle-head* from dialect *chuck*,[2] lump of wood, log.

In the 17th century the name *loggerhead* was humorously given in nautical language to an iron rod with a bulb at the end, which, when heated, was plunged into a tar-bucket in order to liquefy the contents. Later, the same name was applied to a smaller implement similarly used for the heating of "flip." We may suppose that such contrivances were convenient extempore weapons when dudgeon grew high either on board ship or in the inn kitchen, for we find the expression to "go to loggerheads" well recorded from the 17th century onward. Cf. the synonymous to "go to clublaw,"[3] which belongs to the same period. The modern phrase "at loggerheads" was probably suggested by "at daggers drawn."

[1] This occurs, along with *beetle-head* (p. 15), in the same scene of The Taming of the Shrew.

[2] Identical with nautical *chock*, wooden wedge, etc. (cf. *chock-a-block*). This has influenced *chockfull*, but the latter is centuries older than the simple *chock*, and probably comes from Mid. Eng. *choke*, jawbone, "chops." It would thus correspond rather to the current nautical "back-teeth awash."

[3] The German equivalent was *faustrecht*, fist-law: "*faustrecht brauchen*: to go to clublaw with one" (Ludwig, 1716).

Maelstrom

A writer in the Daily News (April 4, 1927) describes how, in the course of the World War, various States "were drawn, by various causes and for differing motives, relentlessly into the maelstrom." This hackneyed figure of speech, which was perhaps stereotyped by Poe's fantastic absurdity, A Descent into the Maelström (1844), alludes to the old belief that even to approach the dreaded whirlpool off the northern coast of Norway was certain destruction for a ship. The origin of this superstition is obscure, for nautical literature, except for Jenkinson's mention (c. 1560) of the "Malestrand" (in Hakluyt), has, so far as my reading goes, nothing to say about the *maelstrom*, nor do I find the word in any English dictionary till late in the 19th century.

Although, since the publication (1752) of Pontoppidan's Natural History, *malström* has been a familiar word in Danish and Norwegian, it has apparently never been in popular use, but has remained a literary convention. It is not of Scandinavian origin. The corresponding Old Norse word is *röst*, still used, in the form *roost*, of various "races" or currents in the Orkneys and Shetlands.

Maelstrom is archaic Dutch *maelstroom*, now *maalstroom*. Its first printed record appears to be on maps such as those in Mercator's[1] Atlas. Dutch whalers were ahead of our own country in Arctic ventures, and it is possible that the name was given to

[1] Mercator (1512–94) was a Dutch geographer who latinized his name Kremer (see p. 117, *n.* 1). He adopted as the frontispiece of his map-book a figure of Atlas supporting the world. Hence the current sense of *atlas* in various European languages.

the whirlpool by some early Dutch navigator. It is explained as from *malen*,[1] to grind, to revolve, and *stroom*, stream. Perhaps what the first giver of the name really had in his mind was a comparison with a mill-stream. The *maelstrom* is described by early authorities as a current, and the swiftness of the mill-stream or mill-race is as common a figure of speech as the stillness of the mill-pond: "It was quite calm and the sea as smooth as a mill-pond" (Dampier, 1697).

Mealy-mouthed

We now understand by a *mealy-mouthed*[2] person one who objects to calling a spade a spade. This seems to be due to association with the theoretically clogging effects of "meal" on the vocal apparatus. An older form is *meal-mouthed*, which Minsheu (1617), the first lexicographer to deal with the word, explains as "faire spoken; quasi qui farinam loqueretur, cujus verba blanda sunt et mollia instar farinæ." Here we are somewhat away from the current meaning, for the *mealy-mouthed* man's words are not so much "cajoling" and "tender" as disguised. The original *meal-mouth* was, as Minsheu suggests, not a squeamish conversationalist, but a deliberate flatterer.

This seems clear from the earliest records of the word. In 1546, Heywood, whose general attitude

[1] In Falk & Torp it is suggested that the first syllable is folk-etymology for Dutch *waal*, whirlpool, but this hardly seems likely.

[2] On the etymology of this compound I had in 1917–18 an argument with the late Henry Bradley, Editor of the Oxford Dictionary. This discussion, in which I left to my opponent the last word which seemed due to his greater age and eminence, will be found in the Modern Language Review for those years.

towards womankind may be described as désenchanté, wrote, of the Delilah type of wife :

> Shee speaketh as shee would creepe into your bosome.
> And, when the meale mouth hath woon the bottome
> Of your stomacke,[1] then will the pickthanke[2] it tell
> To your most enimies.
>
> (Proverbs i. 10.)

In 1576, Abraham Fielding, translating a Latin version of Isocrates, used "flatterers and meal-mouthed merchants"[3] to render the single word *assentatores*, an *assentator* being, according to Cooper (1573), "a flatterer that upholdeth ones yea and nay in every thing." These examples seem to show that the 16th-century *meal-mouthed* had a very different meaning from the 17th-century "*mealy-mouthed*: trop honteux, qui par un excès de modestie n'ose pas dire sa pensée" (Miège, 1688). The early Latin dictionaries tell the same tale, e.g. "*perblandus*: very pleasant and curteous in wordes: meale-mouthed, passing faire spoken" (Morel, 1583); "*meale-mouthed*: perblandus" (Holyoak, 1612). The *meal-mouth* was not reticent, quite the reverse: he was rather what in Late Latin was called *melliloquus*, i.e. honey-tongued.

The association of honey with flattering speech is both ancient and universal.[4] For these reasons I had long been convinced that the first element of *meal-mouth* is the Aryan word for honey, when, in a North-

[1] I.e., has found out your inmost feelings or intentions. Cf. John Paston's, "I have doon my devoyr to know my lady Wulgraves stomacke" (Paston Letters, iii. 120).

[2] See p. 35, *n.* 1.

[3] These merchants have no connection with merchandise. They are "chaps."

[4] *Bukkameli*, lit. honey-mouth, is in Sardinian a propitiatory name for the weasel.

umberland Assize Roll (1279), I came across the name of Henry Millemuth.[1] In the same Roll occurs (1256) the name of Robert Pusekat, three centuries earlier than the Oxford Dictionary's first record for *puss(y)-cat*. *Millemuth*, which is probably the origin of the existing name Melmoth, can hardly mean other than honey-mouth. The word *honey* and its cognates are limited to the West Germanic languages. Gothic has *milith*, cognate with Lat. *mel*, Gr. μέλι, Old Ir. *mil*, Welsh *mel*, Albanian *mjal*, etc. That this more widely spread name must have existed also in West Germanic is evident from Anglo-Sax. *milisc*, honeyed, *miliscian*, to become sweet, and especially in *mildēaw* or *meledēaw*.

This compound originally meant honey-dew, nectar. In Mid. English it took the sense which it now has, and was sometimes written *mealdew*, no doubt as a result of the fluffy, "mealy" aspect of mildew. The same compound is found in most other Teutonic languages, in which, as in English, it has also been generally associated with *meal*. Thus Old High Ger. *militou*, honey-dew, is now *meltau*, mildew. I imagine that medieval science regarded *mildew* as caused by the gummy excretion, "honey-dew," to which the name was earlier applied.

That *mildew* is well recorded in Anglo-Saxon, while *milmuth* is not, does not seem to me a serious argument against the etymology I propose. The one is the name of an everyday phenomenon, while the other is the type of nickname which only gets written down by an isolated accident. The fact that the Oxford Dictionary has no record at all of *merry-mouth* did not prevent Adam Murimuth from getting himself born in the

[1] This early record makes it very probable that the compound is Anglo-Saxon.

13th century and ending in the Dictionary of National Biography.

It is, however, only fair to add that Dr. Bradley produced a strong argument against my "honey" etymology by quoting the obsolete German phrase "mehl im maul[1] haben," used in the now accepted sense of the English compound. It is only recorded in Luther's Tischreden.[2] He complains of those Laodiceans, who, questioned on doctrinal points, "behielten immerzu meel im maul" and answered only "Nun, nun." This evidently refers to clogged or unwilling utterance. Cf. also Sebastian Brant, in his Narren-Schyff[3] (1494):

> Der musz mäl han, vil me dann vil,
> Wer yedems mul verstopfen wil.[4]

In the absence of earlier records it is impossible to say whether the German metaphor has gone through the same transformation which I postulate for the English, or whether the two belong to separate categories. I will leave the solution to the reader.

Mountebank

It is very doubtful whether any public entertainer landing at Southampton in, say, the 14th century

[1] A crude word for mouth, "snout," occurring in numerous disparaging compounds.

[2] Published (1567) under the title Colloquia Mensalia, perhaps the origin of *table-talk* in this particular sense.

[3] Translated (1508), under the title Shyp of Folys, by Alexander Barclay.

[4] He must have meal, much more than much, who wants to stop everyone's mouth.

would have been met in state by the Mayor and Corporation. He would more probably have been met by the "headborough" and conveyed to the lock-up for further consideration. The public entertainer, the only individual, according to Dean Inge, who is sure of a comfortable living under democracy, was for the Middle Ages a "rogue and vagabond." The Romantics gave a poetic glamour to the revived words *bard* and *minstrel*, but the original *minstrel*[1] was a buffoon, and the Scottish *bard* was unfavourably regarded by local authorities: "The Schireffe sal punish sorners, over-lyars, maisterfull beggars, fuilles, bairdes, vagaboundes" (Skene, 1599). At Amersham, Bucks, a notice, dated 1821, still announces that the constable has orders to apprehend "all ballad-singers."

The earlier attitude towards this now dominant class is reflected in the history of the word *mountebank* and its congeners. *Mountebank* came to us in the 16th century from It. *montimbanco*, from the phrase "*montar*" *in banco*: to plaie the mountibanke" (Florio, 1598), lit. to "mount on a bench," i.e. to ascend the trestle stage at a fair. The *mountebank* was originally a quack-doctor, who varied his healing activities with displays of conjuring and juggling, in which he was assisted by a comic underling called a *zany*[2] or *merry-andrew*.[3] From its first appearance the word was contemptuous, and its original sense is so far lost that we scarcely use it now except in

[1] Old Fr. *menestrel*, from Vulgar Lat. *ministerialis*, from *minister*, a servant. He was perhaps originally the troubadour's comic assistant. Another Old French form survives as *ménétrier*, a village fiddler.

[2] A dialect pet-form of It. *Giovanni*, John.

[3] *Andrew* was once a stock-name for a manservant.

describing politicians of idealistic tendencies. Old French also borrowed the word from Italian, but rejected it in favour of the alternative *saltimbanco* (Fr. *saltimbanque*), from *saltare*, to leap. This has the same meaning, though here the idea of tumbler or juggler is perhaps more prominent than that of charlatan.

Charlatan also is now chiefly used in connection with political and religious stunts. We took it from Fr. "*charlatan*: a mountebanke, a cousening drug-seller, a pratling quack-salver, a tatler, babler" (Cotgrave, 1611), which is from It. "*ciarlatano*: a mountibanke, pratler, babler" (Florio). This has been popularly associated with It. *ciarlare*, to prattle, which has affected its form. The older word is *ceretano*, originally meaning a vendor of papal indulgences from Cerreto. Thus the *charlatan* began as our old friend the Pardoner, with his wallet "bret-ful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot" (Chaucer, A. 687).

So far the Italian contribution to Renaissance English is not edifying, but Italian is not the only language which has given us names for the impostor. To those already mentioned was added in the 17th century *quacksalver*, an archaic spelling of Dutch *kwakzalver*. This appears to mean one who sells his "salves" by means of his "quack" or patter. Sewel (1708) has the verb "*quakzalven*: to quack as a mountebank." Cf. Ger. *marktschreier*, lit. market-shrieker, explained by Ludwig (1716) as "a quack, a mountebank."

Nightmare

In Words Ancient and Modern (p. 73) I commented incidentally on the gradual transformation of Queen

Mab from a grisly hag into a pantomime fairy.[1] As late as 1627, Drayton tells us that—

> Mab, his [Oberon's] meery queene by night
> Bestrids young folks that lye upright,
> (In elder times the mare that hight,)
> Which plagues them out of measure.
>
> (Nymphidia, vii. 53.)

Johnson records this archaic *mare*, and explains it as "a kind of torpor or stagnation, which seems to press the stomach with a weight; the night-hag."[2] The oldest English record of the word is Anglo-Sax. *mare*, explained in a 7th-century glossary as *incuba*, i.e. an incumbent hag. The compound *nightmare* does not appear till the 13th century. The Promptorium Parvulorum (1440) gives "*mare* or *nygth-mare*: epialtes," i.e. Gr. ἐφιάλτης, nightmare, supposed to mean originally "one leaping upon"; and the simple *mare* still survives in dialect.

When the comic artist depicts the *nightmare* he usually represents it as a kind of equine monstrosity. It has even been, rather improbably, suggested that in Edgar's crazy song—

> Swithold footed thrice the old (= wold);
> He met the night-mare and her nine-fold (Lear, iii. 5)—

"nine-fold" may be an error for "nine foals." At any rate the *mare* of *nightmare* has been popularly apprehended in the familiar zoological sense of the word, not only in English, but also in Dutch, which has substituted *nachtmerrie* (*merrie* = female horse) for the older *nachtmaar*, in which the second component means demon. This would be, illogically enough,

[1] Cf. "*strix*: an hegge (= hag) or fayrie" (Cooper, 1573).

[2] Cf. *hag-ridden*.

assisted by the fact that in early records the *nightmare* is described as "riding" its victims. A similar inverted kind of logic has given us *bedridden* for Mid. Eng. *bedride*, i.e. a "bed-rider."

The same word is found in the other Teutonic languages, e.g. Old Norse *mara* and archaic Ger. *mahr*. The latter is usually replaced in modern German by "*alp* (die nachtmähre): the nightmare, a nocturnal choking one suffers lying abed asleep" (Ludwig, 1716). This *alp*, the first cousin of our *elf*,[1] was regularly used by the less confident German newspapers to describe the oppression weighing on their country during the World War, and as regularly rendered in English newspapers by *Alp*, as though indicating a superincumbency of a mountainous nature. Corresponding to our *elf-lock*, plaited in the manes of horses by malevolent sprites, we find Dan. *marelok* and Ger. *mahrflechte* (from *flechten*, to plait). The English compound is first recorded in Mercutio's famous fantasy:

> This is that very Mab
> That plaits the manes of horses in the night,
> And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
> Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.
> (Romeo and Juliet, i. 4.)

[1] An *elf* and an *oaf* seem to be very unlike, but the words are identical, *oaf* being from the Old Norse form. It took its present meaning via that of changeling brought by the elves, hence a clumsy, half-witted child. Spenser's (or E. K.'s) "etymology" of *elf* is almost worthy of a modern "correspondence column": "The soothe is, that when all Italy was distract into the factions of the Guelfes and the Gibelyns, being two famous houses in Florence, the name began through their great mischiefes and many outrages to be so odious or rather dreadfull in the peoples eares, that, if their children at any time were froward and wanton, they would say to them that the Guelfe or the Gibelyne came. Which words now from them be come into our usage, and, for Guelfes and Gibelyns, we say Elfes and Goblyns" (Shepherd's Calendar, June).

The ultimate origin of *mare* is unsolved. Its regular association with " oppression " has suggested connection with Old Norse *merja*, to crush, but the existence of Old Slav. *mora*, witch, whence Russ. *mora*, nightmare, and of Pol. *mara*, spectre, makes Slavonic origin possible. It is probable that Old Ir. *morrigan*, elf-queen, is also related. At an early date the word passed into French. In Old French we find *mare*, fabulous monster, whence *cauquemare*, *chauchemare*, etc., now *cauchemar*, nightmare, of which the first element is from Lat. *calcare*, to trample, from *calx*, heel.

I should like to suggest to my etymological betters the possibility that the popular association of the *nightmare* with the equine *mare* may in the end be right. The latter word is common Teutonic, e.g. Dutch *merrie* (v.s.), Ger. *mähre*, jade, Old Norse *merr* (whence Dan. *mær*), also contemptuous. The corresponding masculine forms are Anglo-Sax. *mearh*, Old High Ger. *marah*,[1] Old Norse *marr*. With these cf. Gael. *marc* and Welsh *march*, whence the name of the Celtic king who had horse's ears. The root of this widespread word is quite unknown.

There must have been a time when to Western Europeans the mounted horse was as startling and trampling an apparition as it was to the Mexicans when they encountered the Spanish conquistadores. The " bogey-man " of the Greek peasant child is still the centaur.[2] The dreaded Scottish *kelpie*, or water-monster, usually appears in equine form,[3] and the

[1] Hence Old High Ger. *marahscalh*, horse-knave, " marshal."

[2] See also Theocritus, Idyll 15, for the collocation of *μορμώ*, bug-bear, with *ἵππος*, horse.

[3] A more flippant etymologist might be tempted to quote the spectral apparition of " Tam Pearce's old mear " (Widicombe Fair).

names Hengist and Horsa, i.e. stallion and mare, of the adventurers who first flew the White Horse banner off the coast of Britain seem to class the animal with the fantastic and terrifying beasts of heraldry.

Overweening

We have noted, in connection with the expulsion of *lief* by *dear* (p. 97), the inexplicable way in which one synonym sometimes prevails over its rival; another example is *quoth*, the past tense of *quethe*,[1] which, up to the 14th century, was the rival of *say*. The word *ween*, to think, suppose, is common to the Teutonic languages; cf. Dutch *wanen*, Ger. *wähnen*, Old Norse *væna*, Goth. *wenjan*, all derived from a noun now represented in German by *wahn*, delusion (see p. 176). Our verb is now practically limited to the parenthetic "I ween" of pseudo-archaic or humorous speech. Ingoldsby, parodying Scott, writes:

> Out and spake Sir Ingoldsby Bray,
> A stalwart knight, I ween, was he,
> "Come east, come west,
> Come lance in rest,
> Come falchion in hand, I'll tickle the best
> Of all the Soldan's Chivalrie!"

As a working member of the vocabulary *ween* dropped out in the 17th century. Up to that period it was in ordinary use for thinking, supposing. In the Anglo-Saxon Gospels we read: "Heo wēnde [Wyclif, gessinge; Tyndale, supoosynge] thæt hit se wyrt-weard wære, and cwæth to him, Lēof, gif thū hine name, sege me, hwar thū hine lēdest" (John xx.

[1] The compound *bequeath* has survived owing to the traditional character of testamentary phraseology.

15), i.e. "She weened that it was the 'wortward' (keeper of the vegetables), and quoth to him, Sir (lit. beloved, see p. 97), if thou tookest Him, say to me where thou laidest Him." *Ween* is still well recorded in the 16th century, but is used only twice by Shakespeare and does not occur in the Authorized Version. It has bequeathed to us the very useful adjective *overweening*, the present participle of the obsolete verb to *overween* :

> Mowbray, you overween, to take it so ;
> This offer comes from mercy, not from fear.
> (2 Henry IV, iv. 1.)

A parallel to the disappearance of *ween* from English is that of *cuider* (earlier *cuidier*) from French. This verb, from Lat. *cogitare*, to think, is in Old French the usual equivalent of think, suppose. It is rare after the 16th century, but is still in Cotgrave (1611) : "*cuider :* to thinke, weene, deeme, imagine, suppose, presume, have an opinion of, make a ghesse at." It survives in the archaic *outrecuidance*, in Cotgrave "*oultrecuidance :* an overweening, presumption, pride, arrogancie ; too great a conceit of his own sufficiencie." This was a familiar word in Mid. English, and is used by Scott : "Are ye yet aware what your *surquedy* and *outrecuidance* merit for scoffing at the entertainment of a prince of the house of Anjou ?" (Ivanhoe, ch. 27). As far as *outrecuidance* is concerned, this is one of Scott's anachronisms, for, though the word is good 12th-century French, it is not recorded in English before the 15th century.

Besides *outrecuidier* Old French had the synonymous *surcuidier*, which is exactly to "over ween," and, as a synonym of *outrecuidance*, we find also Old Fr.

surcuiderie. This was adopted into English, as *surquidry*, *surquidy*, at a very early date, e.g. it occurs in the Ancren Riwle, which was probably written c. 1225. It is used by Chaucer: "Presumpscioun is whan a man undertaketh an emprise that hym oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do, and this is called surquidie" (I. 403), and was generally current up to the 16th century. There is no record of *overween* or its derivatives before the beginning of the 14th century. The first quotation in the Oxford Dictionary is from Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne, a translation (c. 1300) of William of Wadington's Manuel des Pechiez. The inference is that our *overween* first came into existence as a literal translation of the Old Fr. *surcuidier*, which was already familiar in Mid. English.

Palmistry

As *casuistry* stands for the art of the *casuist*, it might be supposed that *palmistry* is the art of the *palmist*. So it is, but not etymologically. *Palmist* is quite a modern word, introduced with that odd revival of medieval superstition that characterized the later 19th century. The earlier name for a hand-reader was *palmester*, the word used by Cooper (1573) to explain *chiromantes*. *Palmester* again is not a true word, but a back-formation from *palmistry*, a common word in the Middle Ages. The oldest form is Mid. Eng. *palmestrie* or *pawmestrie*, used by Lydgate and Gower. This is a disguised compound, *palm-mystery*.

Mystery is an old word for craft or calling. Salvation Yeo's father "exercised the mystery of a barber-surgeon" (Westward Ho! ch. 7). Its modern spelling, for *mistery*, *mistry*, is due to mistaken association

with the other word *mystery* (Gr. μυστήριον, rite, secret ceremony), an association which at an early date influenced its meaning, giving it a suggestion of secret skill. This association would also be helped by the existence of such craft-gilds as the freemasons,[1] with their cryptic code. The two *mysteries* are sometimes punned on by the Elizabethans.

We still speak of the " art and mystery " of a trade, a phrase corresponding to Fr. " art et métier." *Mystery*, craft, corresponds in sense to Fr. *métier*, earlier " *mestier* : a trade, occupation, misterie, handicraft " (Cotgrave), which is usually derived from Lat. *ministerium*, service, but also represents Old Fr. *maistier*, Lat. *magisterium*,[2] mastery. The form of *mistery* is due rather to its representing Mid. Eng. and Old Fr. *maistrie*, mastership, skill, the vowel of which has been thinned like that of *master* (Mr.), now pronounced *mister*. The " crafts or mysteries of York," whose religious plays[3] (c. 1430) have come down to us, were called *maistries*.

Mid. Eng. *maistrie* (also *mestrie*) meant skill, know-

[1] Originally a gild of highly skilled travelling masons, of whom we find records from the 14th century onward. Fr. *franc-maçon* and Ger. *freimaurer* are adapted from English. The reason for the " free " is much disputed, but it is, at any rate, a curious coincidence that they were workers in *freestone*, from Old Fr. *franche pierre*, noble stone (see p. 55, *n.* 1). In the 13th-century Livre des Métiers de Paris, we read that the mason's calling was " free " : " Il puet estre maçon à Paris qui veut, pour tant que il sache le mestier et qu'il œvre as us et aus coustumes du mestier."

[2] The *magister*, master, was the " major " ; the *minister*, servant, was the " minor."

[3] The plays themselves are often called *mysteries* or *mystery-plays*, and at one time it was believed that they were so called because performed by gilds (" misteries ") of craftsmen. This use of *mystery* is, however, comparatively modern in English, and corresponds to the French use of *mystère*, religious rite, for a sacred play.

ledge, and is used of a magic trick by the wicked "chanoun" in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale:

> Taketh good heede ye shul wel seen at eye
> That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.
>
> (Chauc. G. 1059.)

This *maistrie, mestrie*, already popularly associated with "mysterious" knowledge, would be a natural translation of Gr. *μαντεία*, divination, whence *chiro-mancy*, lit. hand-divination, and one *-m-* of *palm-maistrie* would automatically disappear. Some of the early lexicographers seem to have recognized the connection, e.g. Holyoak (1612) has "*chiromantia:* palmaistrie."

Piecemeal

> All the infections that the sun sucks up
> From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him
> By inchmeal a disease.
>
> (Tempest, ii. 2.)

In connection with *self-help* (p. 142) we shall see that a word, occasionally used as a prefix in Anglo-Saxon, survived in only one Mid. English compound, and then, from the 16th century onward, attained such vitality that its family can be counted almost by thousands. The *-meal* of *piecemeal* illustrates the opposite tendency. *Piecemeal* is the only modern survival of a very common word-formation, exemplified by dozens of obsolete recorded compounds, not to mention the unlimited nonce-words that any English-speaking person, from the Anglo-Saxons onward, may have felt himself at liberty to coin.

Piecemeal is a hybrid (Fr. *pièce*) substituted for Anglo-Sax. *styccmælum*, from *stycce*, a piece. Anglo-Saxon had about ten similar compounds, some of

which, such as *scēafmælum*, sheaf by sheaf, *gēarmælum*, year by year, disappeared from Mid. English, while others, such as *dropmælum*, survived into the Tudor age. Mid. English coined about ten more, including *pennymeal* and *piecemeal*. Others, such as Shakespeare's *inchmeal*, still occasionally used, seem to have come into use in the 16th century : " *unciatim :* inche by inche, inchemeale " (Cooper, 1573). The only other *-meal* word used by Shakespeare is *limb-meal*, Anglo-Sax. *limmælum :* " O, that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal " (Cymbeline, ii. 4).

The Anglo-Sax. *-mælum*, which became a mere suffix corresponding to the Lat. *-tim* of *gradatim*, *viritim*, etc., is really the instrumental plural of *mæl* or *māl*, mark, time. It exists in modern English as *meal*,[1] a repast, originally the regular time for refreshment, and as *mole*, a mark (on the skin [2]). The cognate Ger. *mal* means time in the sense of Fr. *fois*. It also occurs in the multiplicatives *einmal*, *zweimal*, etc., in *denkmal*, a monument (think-mark), in *mal*, a mole, and *mahl*, a repast.

In the suffix sense of *-meal* German uses rather *-weise* (cf. our *-wise*, *-ways*), as in *haufenweise*, which in archaic English might be rendered by *heapmeal :* " The hearce then being mounted up into the second tabernacle, they get together spices and odours of all sorts, likewise all the sweet smelling fruits, hearbs, juices and liquors that the whole world can yield, and thereon poure the same forth by heape-meale " (Camden's Britannia, trad. Holland, 1637).

[1] The *meal* of *oatmeal* is quite unconnected. It is related to *mill* and Lat. *molere*, to grind.

[2] But originally any spot, as in *iron-mould*, which is a corruption of *iron-mole*.

Piepowder

"Who ever heard of the Bristol Court of Tolzey and Pie Poudre? Yet this quaintly named and ancient tribunal is a flourishing institution. Recently, in one year, 1899 plaints were entered in it, and nearly all of them were the actions of moneylenders against defaulting debtors." Thus a writer in John Bull (Jan. 9, 1926) on the methods of those kindly Scots who broadcast their offers of pecuniary assistance "simply upon signature and without security." The Oxford Dictionary describes the Court of Piepowders as "a summary court formerly held at fairs and markets to administer justice among itinerant dealers and others temporarily present," with no indication of its survival at Bristol; so that, in this case, John Bull becomes a supplementary source of philological information. A similar survival is the Court of Passage at Liverpool.

Anglo-Fr. *pie-puldreus*, which, in Modern French, would be *pied-poudreux*, dusty-foot, was applied to wayfarers, especially itinerant dealers. In a curious set of questions and answers on civic rights and duties giving the result of a discussion between Hubert de Burgh and the citizens of London (1220), we read, "Si Ballivi civitatis possint terminare querelas transeuntium per villam qui moram non potuerunt facere, qui dicuntur 'pepoudrous,' de debitis vel injuriis eis factis, an oporteat eos expectare Hustengum[1]?" (Liber Albus). In Scottish law the term is rendered by *dustyfoot*. Skene (1599) has "*pede-pulverosus*: ane French word, 'pied puldreux,' dustie-fute, or an

[1] For the history of *hustings* see Words Ancient and Modern, p. 56.

vagabound, speciallie ane merchand or creamer,[1] quha hes na certain dwelling place, quhair the dust may be dicht fra his feete or schone, to quhom justice suld be summarly ministred within three flowinges and ebbings of the sea."

The *Tolzey*, which at Bristol is associated with *Piepowders*, survives in other towns also. Many of my readers will know the old Tolsey which still stands in Burford. Blount (1656) tells us that, " Tolsey or Toldsey is a place in the city of Bristow, answerable to the old Exchange in London, where the merchants meet." The correct form is *tolsel*,[2] the toll-hall, with which we may compare *tolbooth*, originally " receipt of custom," later a town-hall, and finally, from the cells in the basement, the city prison, as at Edinburgh. Wyclif describes Matthew the publican as " sittynge in a tolbothe " (Matt. ix. 9).

Pikestaff

One of the most charming features of the modern American language is its great wealth of unexpected and hyperbolical[3] simile. It would occur to few of us

[1] " Ane pedder is called an marchand, or creamer, quha bearis ane pack or creame upon his back, quha are called beirares of the puddill be the Scottes-men of the realme of Polonia, quhairof I saw ane great multitude in the towne of Cracowia, anno Dom. 1569 " (Skene, *op. cit.*). The word, which survives in the surname Cremer, is really of Dutch or Low German origin ; cf. Ger. *krämer*, dealer.

[2] Anglo-Sax. *sele*, hall, a Common Teutonic word ; cf. Ger. *saal*, etc. Fr. *salle* and It. *sala* are from Teutonic.

[3] American seems to have an equal affection for the terse and the verbose. It is constantly creating indispensable brevities of the *high-brow, dope-fiend, rubber-neck* type, and then elaborating them into jewels several words long. Both types are attractive. For instance, nothing could be better than *bone-head*, but there is also much to be said for " ivory-domed simp " or " ossified above the collar."

to describe a candidate as having about as much chance as an ice-cream-freezer in hell, or to liken a hesitating speaker to a stuffed frog with laryngitis. English simile is usually less imaginative, though, among the examples of " as plain as . . ." given in Wilstack's Dictionary of Similes, I note " plain as your own miniken breeches " (Beaumont and Fletcher). No simile illustrating plainness has more vogue, even now, than " as plain as a pikestaff," the use of which involves probably in most people's minds a double misapprehension.

" Plain as a pikestaff " (1591) had as an earlier equivalent " plain as a packstaff " (1542) :

> The ant hath circumspection, ye have none;
> You packstaff plain, the ant crafty and close.
> (Heywood, The Spider and the Fly.)

We also find " plain as a packsaddle " (1553). The figure did not originally refer to the " obviousness " of the *packstaff*, but to its simplicity as compared with the numerous official staves borne by functionaries and adorned with appropriate emblems. The *packstaff* was carried by the pedlar and used as a support when he opened his pack for inspection, while the *pikestaff*, which now suggests the shaft of a pike or heavy spear, meant for Piers Plowman the long iron-shod staff of the wayfarer, a kind of alpenstock. Edie Ochiltree still carried a *pikestaff* at the beginning of the 19th century. It is evident that either *packstaff* or *pikestaff* would contrast in plainness with such symbols of office as that which Mr. Grummer flourished before Sam Weller's eyes: " ' Ah,' said Sam, ' it's wery pretty, 'specially the crown, which is uncommon like the real one ' " (Pickwick, ch. 24).

Thackeray writes of " calling a pikestaff a pikestaff " as a variation on " calling a spade a spade." This phrase also perpetuates a mistake. The Greeks used " figs " and " bowls " as examples of plain speaking : *Τὰ σῦκα σῦκα, τὴν σκάφην δὲ σκάφην ὀνομάζων* (Lucian). Plutarch tells us of Philip, *Σκαιοὺς ἔφη φύσει καὶ ἀγροίκους εἶναι Μακεδόνας, καὶ τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγοντας* (Moralia, 178 B.). *Σκάφη*, from *σκάπτειν*, to dig, was used of anything hollowed out, e.g. a trough, bowl, dug-out canoe. Erasmus, translating Plutarch, mistook the word, by an oversight, for *σκαφεῖον*, a spade, another derivative of *σκάπτειν*, and rendered it by Lat. *ligo*, a spade or mattock. Accordingly Udall, translating Erasmus (1542), wrote, " Philippus considered that the Macedonians were feloes of no fyne witte in their termes, but altogether grosse, clubbyshe (= clownish) and rusticall, as they whiche had not the witte to calle a spade by any other name than a spade," and popular speech has perpetuated the error.

Plum-pudding

" The monument near London Bridge," said Mr. F.'s aunt, " was put up arter the Great Fire of London ; and the Great Fire of London was not the fire in which your uncle George's workshops was burnt down." The Monument, as everybody knows, is supposed to indicate the approximate spot where the fire broke out in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane. The fact that it began at Pudding Lane and ended at Pie Corner is one of the few historic truths which youth acquires without difficulty (along with Alfred and the cakes, or Henry Beauclerk and the lampreys), but these names are really less comestible than they appear.

To take the Pie first, Stow's etymology from "a fayre inn for receipte of travellers," i.e. the Magpie Inn, has more probability than Mr. Zettersten's suggested connection with "the many cooks' stalls which catered for the people frequenting the old Bartholomew Fair at Smithfield."

The oldest meaning of the word *pudding* is intestine. It is derived from Fr. *boudin*,[1] which now means the kind of sausage made of pig's fat and blood which we call a black pudding or hog's pudding. Pudding Lane was so called "because the butchers of Eastcheape have their skalding house for hogges there, and their puddings with other filth of beasts are voided down that way to theyr dung boates on the Thames" (Stow). The comestible pudding was originally enclosed in an entrail or stomach, one of its early forms being the haggis,[2] which is explained by *puddynge* in the Promptorium Parvulorum (1440):

> Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
> Great chieftain o' the pudding race!
> Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
> Painch, tripe, or thairm.[3]
>
> (Burns, Address to a Haggis.)

The sausage-skin was in time partly supplanted by the bag or cloth without which a *pudding* was not a *pudding*. It is recorded that good King Arthur once "stole three sacks of barley-meal to make a bag-pudding." Another description of the delicacy was *poke-pudding*, from an old word, related to *pouch* and *pocket*, which once helped to name a popular *bonnet*,

1 For the initial cf. *purse*, from Fr. *bourse*.

2 A common word in Mid. English, though now regarded as Scotch.

3 Paunch, tripe, or intestine.

and is still used in Kent for a hopsack. It has always been the custom of the vulgar to name members of foreign nations from what is regarded as their most popular article of diet. Thus the Frenchman is known as *froggy* and the German as *sausage*. In French the name *rosbif* is sometimes applied to the Englishman, and his regular description in Scotland was for a long time *poke-pudding* or *pock-pudding*, a term often used by Scott's vernacular speakers.

As to the current meaning of *pudding*, we cannot do better than quote the Oxford Dictionary's toothsome definition : " A preparation of food of a soft or moderately firm consistency, in which the ingredients, animal or vegetable, are either mingled in a farinaceous basis (chiefly of flour), or are enclosed in a farinaceous 'crust,' and cooked by boiling or steaming. Preparations of batter, milk and eggs, rice, sago, tapioca, and other farinaceous substances, suitably seasoned, and cooked by baking, are now also called puddings," which brings us naturally to *plum-pudding*.

The May races at Cambridge take place in the following month, morning calls and matinées are associated with the afternoon, the *rum-runner* purveys a fluid which claims to be Scotch whisky, and *plum-pudding* contains no plums. The compound is not recorded before the 18th century, and the *plum-pudding* of that age was made of raisins, which leads Johnson to give, as a subsidiary sense of *plum*, " raisin ; grape dried in the sun." The *plum-pudding* was elaborated, by means of a cloth, from the 16th century *plum-broth* or *plum-porridge*. The essential feature of this delicacy was supplied by dried plums or prunes, and the name persisted after these were superseded by raisins. The floruit of Little Jack Horner being

unknown, the botanical identification of the " plum " extracted by him from a Christmas pie remains in the realm of conjecture.

Point-blank

Every marksman knows that, in shooting at the target, allowance must be made for windage and trajectory. It is only at very close quarters (see p. 38) that one can shoot *point-blank*, i.e. (theoretically) aiming straight at the bull's-eye. When we ask a question *point-blank*, we do it also without any windage in the way of circumlocution. The phrase is recorded only from the gunpowder period, though it no doubt originated with archery. Shakespeare uses it twice. Ford says that Falstaff's page Robin " will carry a letter twenty miles, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score[1] " (Merry Wives, iii. 2), and Jack Cade (2 Henry VI, iv. 7) taunts Lord Say with being " within point-blank," i.e. immediate range, of his jurisdiction.

Shakespeare also has *blank* in the sense of target :

> Slander,
> Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
> As level as the cannon to his blank,
> Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
> And hit the woundless air.
>
> (Hamlet, iv. 1.)

Technically it was the bull's-eye, painted white. Petruchio makes a punning allusion to Bianca in his final words to Lucentio : " 'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white." Both *blank* and *white* are common in figurative use ; cf. " *toucher au blanc* : to

[1] The word " yards " is to be understood.

strike the white ; to hit the naile [1] on the head " (Cotgrave, 1611).

Point-blank is coined from the verb to *point* and *blank*, bull's-eye. Modern French has no fewer than three equivalents, viz. " de but en blanc," " à brûle-pourpoint " and " à bout portant," all used figuratively as well as literally. The first of these, like *point-blank*, probably originated with archery, which involved much more elaborate calculation than musketry, and it would almost seem that *but* [2] must at one time have meant the starting-point as well as the target. The other two, " at burn-doublet " and " with muzzle touching," belong to the gunpowder age.

Purblind

We seldom use *purblind* now except in the figurative sense of intellectual shortness of sight. It was once a regular description of the myopic, and was erroneously connected by the 17th-century etymologists with the verb to *pore* : " *poreblind*, vel, ut vulgò effertur, *purblind*, *μύωψ*, · à verb. to *pore*, propius admotis oculis inspicere, quod myopum seu semicæcorum proprium est " (Skinner, 1671). This is repeated by Johnson.

The correct etymology is probably " pure blind " (cf. " clean crazy "), and the original meaning was totally blind. *Pure* was often adverbial in Mid. Eng-

[1] Probably the " nail," earlier " pin," in the middle of the bull's-eye. A variant was to " hit the pin " : " Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead ! stabbed with a white wench's black eye ; shot through the ear with a love-song ; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind boy's butt-shaft " (Romeo and Juliet, ii. 4). Here *butt-shaft* means an arrow used in shooting at the target.

[2] Cf. *débuter*, originally to play the first shot at bowls.

lish. It is so used by Robert of Gloucester (1297), who tells us that Nero reigned—

> Threttene yer & an half, & that was long inou,
> Vor seinte Peter & seinte Poul in his last yer he slou.
> He bicom sone ther after pur gidy & wod.[1] (l. 1542.)

The same chronicler is our earliest authority for *purblind*:

> Wo so bi king Willames daye slou hert other hind
> Me ssolde pulte out bothe is eye & makye him pur blind.
> (l. 7713.)

Similarly in archaic Dutch we find "*puursteeken* (v. i.) *blind*: stone-blind" (Sewel, 1766).

As early as Wyclif *purblind* is used of defective sight or blindness of one eye. In the Latin dictionaries, from the Promptorium Parvulorum (1440) onward, it is the regular gloss for Lat. *luscus*,[2] e.g. "*luscus*: pore blinde; also he that hath but one eye" (Cooper, 1573).

The sense of totally blind also survived into the 17th century, and is alone exemplified in Shakespeare. "Purblind boy," for Cupid, was a stock poetic convention of the period, and Alexander describes Ajax as "a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use; or purblinded Argus, all eyes and no sight" (Troilus and Cressida, i. 2). After Shakespeare's time the current sense prevails.

With this curious division of sense in *purblind* Eduard Müller (Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Englischen Sprache, 1878) compares the history of *parboil*, which, from its earliest use (15th century), has meant both (correctly) to boil thoroughly (Old Fr. *parbouillir*) and to half-boil (as though "part boil").

A common dialect word for *purblind*, in its now accepted sense, is *sandblind*. Sewel (1708) has "*stik-*

[1] An old word for mad. It is one source of the surname Wood.

[2] Whence Fr. *louche*, squinting.

ziende[1]: purblind, sandblind." The compound is due to folk-etymology, *sand* perhaps being felt as conveying less of finality than the *stone* of *stone-blind*.[2] The corruption is a very old one, dating from the 15th century. Johnson's explanation, "having a defect in the eyes, by which small particles appear to fly before them," shows how the epithet was popularly apprehended. In The Heart of Midlothian (ch. 31) Scott writes, "They entered the hamlet without being observed, except by one old woman, who, being nearly 'high-gravel blind,' was only conscious that something very fine and glittering was passing by." This is one of Scott's many resuscitations from Shakespeare, who makes Launcelot Gobbo coin *gravel-blind* as a jocular intensification of *sand-blind*: "This is my true-begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not" (Merchant of Venice, ii. 2).

The *sand-* of *sandblind* is a substitution for the Anglo-Saxon prefix *sām-*, half, found also in the other Teutonic languages and cognate with Lat. *semi-*. It is still used in dialect, especially in *samsodden*, Anglo-Sax. *sām-soden*, half-boiled,[3] which is the Dorset[4]

[1] Lit. "stick-seeing." Dutch *stik-*, *stek-*, *stok-*, are used indifferently in such compounds, e.g. Kilian (1623) has *stick-blind*, *steck-blind*, *stock-blind*, defined as omnino cæcus," the last of the three being oddly explained as "baculo viam dirigens." This "stick" is not the blind man's helper, but a mere intensive prefix; cf. our *stockstill*, Ger. *stockdunkel*, quite dark, etc.

[2] *Stone* is here a pure intensive; cf. *stone-deaf*, *stony-broke*.

[3] *Sodden* is the past participle of *seethe*, to boil (Exod. xii. 9). The best-seller has made a new verb from it, e.g. "Her poor little handkerchief so 'soddened' with tears that it oozed and dripped."

[4] Also in other counties, but it is especially a West-country word. Hence also *sammy*, a simpleton: "He'd never ha' been sich a sammy as to let her keep everything" (M. E. Francis, Fiander's Widow).

equivalent for the Londoner's figurative *half-baked*. Anglo-Saxon had several such compounds, including *sām-wīs*, half-witted. Although not recorded by the dictionaries, this compound must have survived into the Mid. English period, as it gave the Dorset surname *Samways*, so common round Dorchester and Weymouth, which was still spelt *Samwise* in the early 16th century.

Rake-hell

Rake, a debauchee, was at one time used of both sexes. Pope's famous couplet—

> Men, some to business, some to pleasure take;
> But every woman is at heart a rake—

states a thesis which Jean de Meun, in the 13th century, had put in cruder terms. Originally *rake* was, however, masculine only. It is a 17th-century abbreviation of *rake-hell*, which was only used of men. Johnson defines *rake-hell* as "a wild, worthless, dissolute, debauched, sorry fellow," and gives examples from Spenser and Bacon, the latter of whom credits Henry VII with calling Perkin Warbeck "the king of rake-hells."

According to the Oxford Dictionary and Skeat the compound is formed from *rake* and *hell*. This etymology seems to be based on the fact that the phrase to "rake hell" is used (1542) by Udall: "Suche a feloe as a manne should rake helle for." Trench (English Past and Present) regards it as folk-etymology for the Mid. English adjective *rakel*, reckless, and there is a good deal to be said for his theory.

Rakel, an adjective of unknown origin, occurs several times in Chaucer :

> He not forgat his wise governance,
> But in himself with manhod gan restreyne
> Ech rakel dede and ech unbridled chere (= manner).
> (Troilus, iii. 427.)

He also has the corresponding abstract noun :

> Hast thou not seyd in blaspheme of this goddes,
> Through pride, or through thy grete rekelnesse,
> Swich thing as in the lawe of love forbode is ?
> (Envoy à Scogan, 15.)

This *rakel* had an uninterrupted life from the 13th century to the 19th, the last Oxford Dictionary quotation (s.v. *rackle*) being, from Lancashire dialect, " Is there ony news o' that rackle brother o' thine ? " It is booked (1570) as *rakyl* by the lexicographer Levins, and glossed by " insolens." It may be noted that in the first quotation for *rake-hell* the compound is also adjectival : " The rakehell lyfe that longes to loves disporte " (Surrey, c. 1547).

Rake-hell looks very much like a punning perversion of *rakel*. The Reformers were very fond of this kind of word-juggling, with an implied etymological moral. Latimer, in one of his sermons, thus plays on the word *homily* : " Some call theym ' homlyes,' and in dede they maye be well called, for they are ' homely ' handeled." It is quite possible that *rake-hell* for *rakel* suggested Udall's verb to " rake hell." My chief objection to the " rake hell " origin is that it makes no sense. The very numerous compounds of this type always denote the individual who carries out the action described, e.g. *sawbones*, *turnkey*, *stopgap*,

Shakespeare, Makepeace, Turnbull. A debauchee might be described as the " rakings of hell," " scum of hell," etc., but why should he himself " rake hell " ?

Ramshackle

The adjective *newfangled*, now applied to novelties, was originally used, in a slightly different form, of those who crave for novelty. It is Mid. Eng. *newfangel*, for which our first authority is Chaucer's Squire, who " left half-told the story of Cambuscan bold " :

> Men loven of propre kynde newefangelnesse,
> As briddes doon that men in cages fede ;
> For though thou nyght and day take of hem hede,
> And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,
> And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
> Yet right anon as that his dore is uppe,
> He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
> And to the wode he wole and wormes ete ;
> So newefangel been they of hire mete
> And loven novelrie of propre kynde.
>
> (Chauc. F. 610.)

The origin of the word is an unrecorded Anglo-Sax. *fangol*, ready to snatch, from the stem of the verb *fōn*, which is cognate with Ger. *fangen*, to catch. The *-d* was instinctively added in late Mid. English to give the word a more adjectival form, and the new meaning begins to appear in the 16th century.

Ramshackle illustrates the opposite phenomenon, the loss of *-d*. It is a 19th-century alteration of *ramshackled*. This is apparently for *ransackled*, the corruption perhaps being due to the influence of Scottish *camshackled*, crooked, distorted, etc. *Ransackle* is a frequentative of *ransack*. The latter, recorded from the 13th century, is Old Norse *rannsaka*,

to search a house for stolen goods, whence Swed. *rannsaka* and Dan. *ransage*. It is one of the many administrative words we owe to the Norsemen. The second element is cognate with our *seek*, while the first is an Old Teutonic word for house, recorded also as Goth. *razn* and Anglo-Sax. *ærn*. The latter survives, somewhat disguised, in *barn*, Anglo-Sax. *bern*, contracted from *ber-ern*, barley house, in the archaic *saltern*, salt-works, and in such place-names as Potterne (Wilts), Hardhorn (Lancs), the latter for Anglo-Sax. *hord-ern*, hoard-house, treasury.

Red-handed

Front-de-Bœuf illustrates the insubordinate nature of the English peasantry by telling De Bracy and the Templar, "I did but tie one fellow, who was taken red-handed and in the fact, to the horns of a wild stag, which gored him to death in five minutes, and I had as many arrows shot at me as there were launched against yonder target at Ashby" (Ivanhoe, ch. 25). *Red-handed* has a fine archaic 12th-century ring, but was coined by Scott himself from the old legal phrase "with red hand." This was originally Scottish, but was used also in the north of England for "flagrante delicto."

It referred originally to the murderer caught still dripping with his victim's blood: "The Schrieffe beand certified of slauchter . . . shall incontinent follow the slayer, with sound of horne, and convocation of the Kinges lieges. And gif he be apprehended with reid hand, justice sal be done within that sun. And gif he be taken and apprehended without reid hand, he sal be put in prison, and law sal be done upon him,

within fourty daies" (Skene, 1599). Later it was used of all sorts of offences, e.g. Lord William Howard, of Naworth, writes (1622), "A notorious horse-stealer, dwelling about Ingleton, being taken with the redd hand, confessed the fact."

The corresponding English expressions were "in the act," "in the deed," "in the fact," and "in *or* with the manner" (Numb. v. 13). In the last of these phrases *manner*[1] is a corruption of *manour*, an Anglo-French form of *manœuvre*, lit. handiwork. It was commonly used for "in the act," e.g. "*prendre au faict flagrant*: to take at it, or in the manner; to apprehend upon the deed doing, or presently[2] after" (Cotgrave, 1611); but its oldest application is to the thief caught "with the goods," and it appears to be a mistranslation of the native *hand-habend*, lit. hand-having. Skene still speaks of "handhavang theift, or roberie."

An interesting chapter might be written on Scott's contribution to our phraseology. I will mention only one other example from Ivanhoe. De Bracy (ch. 34) describes his company of mercenaries as his *free-lances*. This has the clank of medieval steel, but is purely Scott's invention.

Rigmarole

The first word-hunter to record *rigmarole* is Samuel Pegge the elder, who defines it (1736) as "a long story, a 'tale of a tub.'" It was in general use in the 18th century, though the lexicographers (Bailey,

[1] For some atrocious Shakespearean punning on the word see Love's Labour's Lost, i. 1.

[2] *Presently*, like *anon*, once meant immediately. In the Authorized Version (Matt. xiii. 20 and xxvi. 53) these words render Gr. εὐθύς and ἄρτι, both meaning straightway, forthwith. *Anon* is Anglo-Sax. *on āne*, on one; cf. pidgin "one time."

Johnson, Ash, etc.) completely ignore it. Todd added it to his revised Johnson (1827). He describes it as "colloquial and modern," and explains it as being probably "a corruption of an old expression, namely, of the famous *ragman's roll*, as a collection of deeds was called, in which the [Scottish] nobility and gentry were compelled to subscribe allegiance to King Edward I of England." Todd also mentions the use of *ragman* in Piers Plowman.

His explanation is not far from the truth, but he misses one link in the history of the word. Historically *ragman-roll* is most familiar in connection with the famous Scottish document of 1291 (see Scott's Antiquary, ch. 6), but this is not the first occurrence of the word. *Ragman* is found a few years earlier [1] as the alternative name of a statute appointing justices to hear and settle certain complaints and carry out certain inquiries: "Statutum de justiciis assignatis quod vocatur Rageman." The result of this statute appears in the famous Hundred Rolls, compiled by the travelling justices after interrogation of the local representatives. The lower part of the membrane for each "hundred" is slit into a number of strips, to which are attached the seals of the jurymen whose names occur in the document. The name *ragman* seems to have been popularly applied to any document having pendent strings and seals. The Chronicle of Lanercost (written c. 1350) tells us that "Instrumentum sive carta subjectionis et homagii faciendi regibus Angliæ a Scottis propter multa sigilla dependentia 'ragman' vocabatur."

[1] The date given in Statutes of the Realm is 1276, but Miss H. M. Camm has found the earliest record of the word in 1280 (Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History).

Two views are held as to the reason for the nickname. Mid. Eng. *ragman* meant a man in rags: "*ragman*, or he that goth with raggyd [*var.* jaggyd] clothys" (Promptorium Parvulorum, 1440). It is also, in Piers Plowman, a name for the devil or a demon.[1] Some[2] are of opinion that the roll, terminating in a bunch of strips, suggested to the popular fancy the raggle-taggle garb of a man all tattered and torn. Others[3] think that the justices, whose arrival in any district was calculated to alarm uneasy consciences, were popularly regarded as "demons," and that the name was applied to the officials before it became associated with their "rolls." However that may be, a gap still remains between the official *ragman-roll* and the modern *rigmarole*. This gap is filled up by another meaning of *ragman-roll*, which occurs almost as early as the administrative use.

Our medieval ancestors were fond of childish games of the same type as the "forfeits" of the Victorians. In Gilbert's ballad of The Gentle Pieman we read:

> And we pulled the Christmas crackers, each of which contained a motto;
> And she listened while I read them, till her mother told her not to.

Similarly medieval society amused itself with a game which consisted in drawing at random mottoes, or rather characters, from a *ragman-roll*. The oldest example we have is an Anglo-French manuscript of

[1] Demons are often described as *ragged* (i.e. shaggy) in Mid. English. Demon is also the earliest meaning of *ragamuffin* (Piers Plowman).

[2] So Miss Camm, op. cit.

[3] So M. Charles Bémont, Le Statut "De Justiciis assignatis quod vocatur Rageman" (in Essays in Medieval History, Manchester, 1925).

c. 1290 entitled Ragemon le Bon.[1] It consists of fifty quatrains, each of which describes the character of one of the players. Wright supposes that "the stanzas were written one after another on a roll of parchment, that to each stanza a string was attached at the side, with a seal, or piece of metal or wood at the end, and that, when used, the parchment was rolled up, with all the strings and their seals hanging together so that the drawer had no reason for choosing one more than another, but drew one of the strings by mere chance, on which the roll was opened to see on what stanza he had fallen." Something similar seems to be suggested by Gower :

> Venus, which stant withoute lawe,
> In non certeyn, but as men drawe
> Of Ragemon upon the chaunce.
> (Confessio Amantis, iii. 355.)

Nearly all the quatrains of Ragemon le Bon are uncomplimentary, and many of those to which lady participants in the game were expected to listen are of such a kind that it would not be surprising if their mothers "told them not to."

The modern view is that the game was named from the administrative *ragman-roll*. Wright suggests that the opposite is the case: "We can very easily imagine why the name was popularly applied to a charter with an unusual number of seals attached to it, which when rolled up would present exactly the same appearance." I am inclined to agree with Wright, and to suppose that a name already familiar

[1] Printed (1844) by Thomas Wright in Anecdota Literaria, together with a 15th-century Ragman-Roll in English. Also, more recently (Helsingfors, 1920), by Professor Långfors.

in connection with fun and merriment may have been jocularly applied to legal documents which suggested an obvious resemblance with an instrument of mirth. This seems to agree better with popular psychology. If this is right, the " raggle-taggle " explanation of the word is to be preferred to the " demon " complex.

Anyhow, it is from the game of *ragman-roll*, and not from the judicial rolls so called, that *rigmarole*, still occasionally spelt *rigmonroll* in the 18th century, is derived. The various " characters " of Ragemon le Bon are naturally quite unconnected and incoherent, which is the essential quality of a *rigmarole*. In fact, before it was realized that they had to do with a game of chance, scholars were much puzzled by the lack of relation between the stanzas of what appeared to be medieval poems. It is easy to see how the sense of a series of rambling statements would grow out of the original.

Ringleader

Human nature being what it is, we are not surprised to find that words of complimentary or neutral sense inevitably tend to become depreciatory. We can hardly conceive of a " ring " of people unassociated with some nefarious purpose,[1] or of a *ringleader* not occupied in crime. Such is the prevailing sense of the word from its earliest records, and the only one known to Shakespeare (*2* Henry VI, ii. 1), but it does not follow that the neutral sense, though less amply exemplified, may not be the original.

Latimer, in his second sermon before Edward VI,

[1] Even those engaged in " kiss in the ring " are sometimes included in the same condemnation.

calls Joab the *ryngleader*, i.e. commander, of David's army. At a rather earlier date Coverdale renders the Vulgate " Apprehendit de viris regionis, qui principes erant malitiæ, quinquaginta viros " by " He toke L. men of the countre, which were the ryngleders of them " [A.V. authors of that mischief] (1 Macc. ix. 61); but, elsewhere, translating Erasmus's Paralipomena to Ephesians, he writes, " Some he would have to be chief, as apostles, ryng leaders and autours of the gospel preaching."

Ringleader naturally suggests the synonymous Ger. " *rädelsführer : the* ringleader; the head or chief of a tumultuous, or seditious, faction " (Ludwig, 1716). *Rädel* is a South German diminutive of *rad*, a wheel. It was also used of a ring of people. Kluge traces *rädelsführer* back to the peasant revolts of 1520, and quotes from a chronicle of 1525, " Die bauern führten damahlen ein pflugs-rädl in ihren fahnen, darzu sie, als zu einem bauern-werkzeug, geschworen haben, beyeinander, gleichwie die spaichen in dem rad, beständig zu verbleiben, dahero das gemeine sprichwort entstanden, dass man die aufwickler [1] und aufruhr-anstiffter noch heutiges tags radführer nennet." [2] If this is correct, there can hardly be any connection in origin with the English word, which is recorded c. 1500. I must confess, however, that the banner with a strange device borne by these early rotarians sounds to me very much like the invention of an early etymologist,

[1] For " *aufwiegler : an* uproar-maker, the ringleader of a faction, a firebrand of sedition " (Ludwig).

[2] The peasants bore at that time a plough-wheel in their banners, by which, as a peasant implement, they had sworn to remain stedfastly together, like the spokes of the wheel, whence arose the common saying that firebrands and rebel leaders are still nowadays called *radführer*.

or like an attempt to give emblematic significance to the word *rädel*, which was also used in the 16th century for a company of landsknechts.[1]

I suggest that a *ringleader* (possibly also a *rädelsführer*) was originally one who led the dance. Before the waltz and the lancers were expelled from our ballrooms, they were called "round" and "square" dances respectively. But the practice of ladies allowing strangers to clutch them by the waist and whirl them round the room only came in after 1800. The waltz alarmed that eminent puritan Lord Byron (see his poem The Waltz, 1813), and is defined by a writer of 1825 as a "riotous and indecent German dance." The earlier "round" dance was, like the Fr. *ronde*, a figure dance in which the performers were arranged in a round (see p. 53, *n.* 1) or "ring," and, although the Oxford Dictionary does not appear to record *ring* in the specific sense of dance, it can be shown (v. i.) that it had this sense.

The earliest Latin dictionary in which I have found *ringleader* is Holyoak (1612). He explains it by "præsultor, dux," a *præsultor* being, according to Cooper (1573), "he that leadeth the daunce among the Romaine priestes called Salii Sacerdotes." Gr. *κορυφαῖος*, ringleader, was originally the head of the chorus in Attic drama. In a Nominale of c. 1340, published by Skeat, occurs the French phrase, "Femme treche mene pur deduyt," with the rendering "Woman the ryng leduth for joye." The Oxford Dictionary associates this with *ring*, a circular group of persons, but Old Fr.

1 *Landsknecht*, a mercenary soldier, whence Fr. "*lansquenet*: a lance-knight or German footman" (Cotgrave), is from *land*, country, and *knecht*, knight, servant. For an erroneous etymology see Quentin Durward, ch. 17.

treche, properly *tresce* or *tresche*,[1] means dance and dance only. The modern French for a *ringleader* is *meneur*, which may very well be for the earlier "meneur de ronde *or* de tresche."

None of the European languages, so far as I know, except possibly German (v. s.), offers a parallel formation to *ringleader*. Dutch *belhamel*, lit. bell-ram, is glossed *ringleader* in 17th-century dictionaries. This is equivalent to Ger. "*leithammel*: the bell-weather; the weather that wears the bell, whereby all the flock is led or guided" (Ludwig, 1716). *Bell-wether* has the same sense in English. Holinshed, in his account of the disputes between the Aquinists and Scotists, writes of "Thomas being the ringleader of the one sect and Scotus the belweadder of the other."

Round-robin

John Jourdain, an early captain in the East India Company's service, notes in his diary (1612), "The Hectoures boat brought a peticion to Sir Henrie Middelton, signed by most of them, in the manner of a circle, because itt should not bee knowne whoe was the principall of the mutiny." This is a very early example of a device, which, from the 18th century onward, has been known as a *round-robin*. It was originally, in its now accepted sense, a nautical term. The *round* is obvious, but why *robin*? All that can be said is that the sailor loves to give human names to objects.

[1] Cf. Prov. and Old It. *trasca*. The etymology of Old Fr. *treschier*, to dance, is probably Goth. *thriskan*, to thresh, originally to trample: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. xxv. 4). Our *thrash*, to belabour, is simply a flail-wielder's metaphor. The original sense of "treading" appears in *threshold*, of which the second element, though found in all the Teutonic languages, is unexplained.

Sometimes he seems to take a name at random. No one knows why the flag that signals approaching departure is called the Blue Peter, nor why the emblem of the pirate is the Jolly Roger.

In the case of *round-robin*, we can at least go a little farther back, though without finding any reason, other than alliteration, for the collocation of the two words, or any link of meaning between the sailor's *round-robin* and earlier uses of the word. In the 17th century *round Robin* appears to have been a vague term of contempt, the adjective being perhaps used in its very old sense of obese. If so, it was probably the adjective that led to the selection of the personal name, as in Simple Simon.[1] It was also the name of some game. Tom Brown, of Dr. Fell fame, mentions (c. 1700) among games popular with sailors, Round-Robin and Hey-Jinks.

The oldest occurrences of *round-robin* are from the two Reformers Coverdale and Ridley, both of whom refer to the profanity of those scoffers who speak of the holy sacrament by such names as *Jack-in-the-box* and *Round-Robin*. These are also the earliest records of *Jack-in-the-box*, the current sense of which is the latest. In the 17th century it meant a sharper who preyed on tradesmen. What *Jack-in-the-box* and *Round-Robin* meant to Coverdale and Ridley no one knows and probably no one ever will know.

Runagate

Medieval Latin had an adjective *renegatus*, one who has denied the [Christian] faith. For the illogical use

[1] Alliteration plays a great part in this region of our vocabulary; cf. Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's "Pelham the pincher" for a plagiarist. Sometimes rime is preferred, e.g. Silly Billy.

of the passive past participle for the active present participle cf. such words as *circumspect*, *fair-spoken*, Fr. *dissimulé*, deceitful, or Ger. *pflichtvergessen*, forgetful of duty. *Renegatus* entered English by separate routes, and has given four separate forms. The earliest is Mid. Eng. *renegat*, taken straight from the Latin form. It is used by Chaucer (Man of Law's Tale) in its original sense of apostate:

> How may this wayke womman han this strengthe
> Hire to defende agayn this renegat?
>
> (B. 934.)

The *renegat* has been previously described (l. 915) as "a theef that hadde reneyed oure creance," i.e. he was technically a *recreant*, for the latter word is the Old French present participle[1] of *recreire* (Lat. *recredere*), to take back one's belief. It belongs, like *renegade*, to the long struggle between the Cross and the Crescent.

In the 16th century the older *renegat* or *renegate* was replaced by the Spanish form *renegado*, Anglicized as *renegade*, and applied especially to Christian captives of the Moslems who had adopted the Mohammedan religion. It is a common word in Hakluyt, where it is defined as "one that first was a Christian and afterwards becommeth a Turke." Captain John Smith has a good deal to say about these "accursed runagados," who taught the Moors seamanship and rose to wealth and importance in Barbary. Shakespeare uses the Spanish form: "Yond gull Malvolio is turned heathen, a very renegado" (Twelfth Night, iii. 2). This is the only occurrence of the word in Shakespeare, nor is any of the three forms found in

[1] The past participle *recreu* was used in the same way, and survives as *recru*, worn-out, exhausted.

the Authorized Version, though the Douay Version has " renegate children " for the " rebellious children " of Isaiah xxx. 1 [*filii desertores* in the Vulgate].

Between the introduction of *renegate* and that of *renegade* folk-etymology manufactured the curious *runagate*. *A-gate*, going, on the road, etc., is still good northern English, and, as *runaway*, earlier *renaway*, meant a deserter, and *runabout*, earlier *renabout*, a vagabond, the popular mind apprehended *renagate* as a similar formation and sometimes pronounced it *runagate*. Nashe describes Julian the Apostate as " Julian the runnagate." Captain John Smith prefers the horrible form *runagado* (v. s.). The change of form gradually affected the sense, so that *runagate* became a rather vague term of abuse, in which the idea of vagabond dominated. It occurs once in Shakespeare (Cymbeline, i. 6) in the sense of unfaithful, but elsewhere he uses it for vagabond, outlaw :

> *Cloten.* I cannot find those runagates ; that villain
> Hath mock'd me :—I am faint.
> *Belarius.* " Those runagates ! "
> Means he not us ? I partly know him ; 'tis
> Cloten, the son o' the queen. I fear some ambush.
> I saw him not these many years, and yet
> I know 'tis he :—We are held as outlaws.
> (Cymbeline, iv. 2.)

Before the end of the 17th century the perverted sense had quite prevailed over the original. Thomas's Latin Dictionary (1644) has " *runnagate :* vide *rogue*." Littleton (1677) renders it by *erro*, a Late Latin word for a vagabond, but notes also " *runagate* that hath quit his religion : *apostata*." Already in the 16th century the word was applied especially to Cain (Gen. iv. 12), and it is still in general dialect use in England and

America for a gadabout.[1] As a literary word it is now familiar only in the Prayer-Book Version of Psalm lxviii. 6, where the Authorized Version has "rebellious."

Scot-free

The tax called "Peter's pence," paid to Rome until 1534, is supposed to have been first levied by one of the Mercian kings. An alternative name, found much earlier, is *Romescot*, recorded in the Laws of the Anglo-Saxons (c. 1050). *Scot* is Anglo-Sax. (*ge*)*sceot*, which normally became *shot*. In early records we find "scot and lot," contribution for municipal purposes, used indifferently with "shot and lot." The latter occurs in the charter granted to the citizens of London by Henry I in 1100: "Item, quod cives Londiniarum sint quieti (= quit, free) de Schot et Loth, et de Danegelde, et de murdro; et quod nullus eorum faciat bellum." *Scot* is due to the influence of cognate Old Norse *skot*, or of Old Fr. *escot* (now *écot*), a contribution, which is of Teutonic origin.

This *shot* (or *scot*) is identical with the missile *shot*, the Teutonic verb meaning to impel an arrow having acquired also the sense of sending a contribution. Cf. Ger. *schoss*, scot, contribution, and *schossfrei*, scot-free. Our colloquial "whole shoot" is for earlier "whole shot." Both *scot* and *shot* were used in Mid.

[1] First recorded in Scott, but probably old in dialect; cf. dial. *rouse-about*. whence American *roustabout*. *Gadder about* is found in the 16th century. The origin of the verb *gad*, to wander, is uncertain. It may have been evolved, by back-formation, from the obsolete *gadling*, vagabond, from Anglo-Sax. *gædeling*, companion, cognate with *gather*. It has been popularly associated with *gadfly*, which is from *gad*, sharp point. Shakespeare (Lear, i. 2) uses "upon the gad" for "on the spur of the moment."

English of each reveller's contribution to the tavern score, a usage which survived into the Victorian age and is still found in dialect. The old administrative sense survives only in Kent and Sussex, where a tax levied for the protection of the marshes against the encroachment of the sea is still a *scot*. Shakespeare uses *scot* once only. He makes Falstaff say, " 'Twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot (i.e. Douglas) had paid me ' scot and lot ' too " (1 Henry IV, v. 4), but he has *shot* several times in the sense of tavern reckoning.

Scot-free, free from taxation, is recorded in the 13th century. Later it acquired the sense of unscathed, and, by the 16th century, that of unpunished, especially in the phrase to " go scot-free." The variant *shot-free* had in the gunpowder age, like the corresponding Dutch and German compounds, the double sense of tax-free and bullet-proof. Falstaff, on the field of Shrewsbury, plays upon the double meaning of the word : " Though I 'scape shot-free at London, I fear the shot here ; here's no scoring, but upon the pate " (1 Henry IV, v. 3).

Self-help

Samuel Smiles, who published Self-Help in 1860, is rather out of fashion now. *State aid*, both components of which are of foreign origin, makes a more successful appeal to the modern temperament than a purely English compound. *Self-help* was probably coined by Carlyle, who, whatever may be thought of his " message," was certainly a great word-maker : " In the destitution of the wild desert does our young Ishmael acquire for himself the highest of all possessions, that of self-help " (Sartor Resartus).

There are few phenomena in the history of our language more curious than the transformation of *self* from an independent word into a prefix of almost infinite application. Very often it is superfluous, e.g. there is no real difference between *conceited* and *self-conceited*, *pride* and *self-pride*, while *self-conscious*,[1] which, since Carlyle, has connoted a morbid preoccupation with the impression one is producing, was used by Locke in the sense of the simple *conscious*.

Anglo-Saxon had thirteen compounds of *self-*, including such expressive words as *self-æta*, cannibal, *self-bana*, *self-cwala* and *self-myrthra*, all meaning suicide. Of the thirteen, only one, *self-will*, survived into the Mid. English period. Modern compounds of *self-* are innumerable. They occupy sixteen of the Oxford Dictionary's majestic, close-packed pages, and it is open to any speaker or writer to add to their number, a thing which happens almost daily.

The modern history of the prefix *self-* begins in the middle of the 16th century, and is linked with certain changes in the human outlook. As a result of the Renaissance man became more introspective, more "self-conscious," and the conception of the *ego*, the *moi*, assumed a greater importance. Many compounds of *self* are first recorded in the works of Sidney and Spenser. The 16th century used *selfness* and *selfist*, where we should now say *egoism* and *egoist*. The 17th century coined *self-hood* to render the *ichheit* (I-ness) of the German mystic Jakob Boehme.

On the other hand, the Reformation, degenerating into bleak puritanism, questioned the rights of the *ego*,

[1] This compound has given birth to others, e.g. the *camera-consciousness* of the nervous film-artist and the *class-consciousness* of the political mountebank.

agreed with Pascal's opinion [1] that "le moi est haïssable," and insisted on the virtue of *self-denial*. The Self-denying Ordinance, "that no member of either House, during the time of this war, shall have or execute any office of command, military or civil," was passed in 1664. The depreciatory *selfish*, of about the same date, is a Presbyterian coinage. *Self-trust* is used as early as 1583 to describe a quality condemned by Calvin. In this and similar compounds *self* has practically assumed the function of an adjective. Shakespeare uses it more than once in correlation with another adjective, e.g. in Richard II's great speech:

> Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
> To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;
> Infusing him with self and vain conceit.
>
> (Richard II, iii. 2.)

The great majority of the *self-* compounds are condemnatory of egoism, e.g. *self-complacent, self-praise, self-righteous, self-styled*, or laudatory of its suppression, e.g. *self-control, self-denial, self-sacrifice*. Even epithets originally complimentary have suffered from association with their prefix, e.g. *self-sufficient* is applied by Puttenham (1589) to the Almighty. The converse development is rare, but *self-respect*, used in the 17th

[1] The use of *moi* for the *ego* seems to have started with Pascal and his Jansenist friends. This perhaps led Addison to make (Spectator, 1714) the apparently erroneous statement that, "The gentlemen of Port-Royal branded this form of writing [in the first person] with the name of an egotism." According to French lexicographers *égotisme* is a fairly recent loan from English: "C'est à la langue anglaise à rendre raison du *-t-*" (Littré). The correct *égoïsme* is much older, but is in no French dictionary before that of the Academy (1762). It may have come, in the Latinized form *egoismus*, from Port-Royal, but Pascal still uses the traditional *amour-propre*.

century of selfish ends or selfishness, rose to dignity about the beginning of the 19th century. To the above groups may be added the large number of terms beloved of the 17th-century philosophers, which often render Greek words in *auto-*, e.g. *self-determination* was used by Locke in the sense of free will some centuries before it became a political catchword. He appears also to have coined *self-evident*.

The chronology of these words is full of surprises. *Self-pity*, which seems an essentially modern idea, dates from 1621, *self-assertive* is no older than Dickens. *Self-government*, which once had the dignified sense of self-control, was first used politically by Jefferson (1798). The *self-made* man is an American product of the late 19th century. *Self-expression*, now the slogan of the young, is quoted by the Oxford Dictionary only as a nonce-word (1892), while the equally popular *self-realization* is not recorded at all. *Self-contained* is a 16th-century word, and its current sense, which sounds like the invention of a contemporary house-agent, came to us from the north along with the word *flat*.[1] In 1827 Scott wrote, in the Chronicles of the Canongate, "It is a house within itself, or, according to a newer phraseology in advertisements, 'self-contained.'"

Slogan

Mr. H. W. Fowler, in that Dictionary of Modern English Usage which is now a treasured possession of all educated people, remarks, with regard to the word *slogan*, "Though the great vogue of the word as a substitute for the older 'motto,' 'watchword,' 'rule,'

[1] Properly *flet*, a Scotch word from Anglo-Sax. *flett*, ground, floor, dwelling.

etc., is of the 20th century only, and we old fogies regard it with patriotic dislike as a Scotch interloper, it was occasionally so used earlier; the Oxford English Dictionary has a quotation from Macaulay."

I fancy that, if Mr. Fowler were rewriting this note to-day, his tone would be somewhat more sardonic. That a "vogue-word" should turn up daily is to be expected, but when, in one issue of our morning paper, we find a Prince of the Church regretting the modern tendency to get drunk on rhetoric, "which usually concludes in a slogan, which more often turns out to be a lie"; a County Director of Education stating that the countryman is "not so much under the dominance of catchwords and slogans as the townsman"; a Midland miner expressing the opinion that it is better to go back to work than "to starve on a slogan"; and sporadic occurrences of the same word in the sporting paragraphs, the letters to the editor, the literary and dramatic news, etc., we begin to be as tired of the *slogan* as the miners [1] must be.

Like most other words that have a vogue, *slogan* is a victim of popular ignorance. Neither "Shoot the Reds!" nor "To Hell with the Capitalists!" is really a *slogan*. The headline, "Back to the Slogan," implying that the miners' case is once more reduced to the formula, "Not a penny off the pay," etc., is a complete misuse of this picturesque word. The *slogan* of the die-hard strikers should be "A Cook! A Cook!" to which the owners might defiantly answer, "A Williams! A Williams!" To imagine a body of moderates intervening to the cry of "A Spencer!" or "A Baldwin!" would involve the mental feat of

[1] This article appeared in the Observer during the great coal deadlock of 1926.

presupposing the existence in the mining industry of a few people endowed with average sense.

Slogan is a Lowland corruption of the Gaelic *sluagh-ghairm*, host-yell, army shout, and the *slogan* of the Highlanders was the name of their chief,[1] which was also the name of their clan. Borrowed in a mangled form by the Lowlanders, it became familiar on the Border, the Scotsmen's cry of "A Hamilton!" or "A Home!" being answered by the Southrons with "A Fenwick!" or "A Musgrave!" With the passing of the liveliness which so long characterized the Debatable Land, *slogan* fell into disuse, to be revived, and misused, like so many other words, by Scott:

> To heaven the Border slogan rung,
> "St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
>
> (Lay, iv. 27.)

It was, no doubt, from Scott that it was borrowed by Macaulay, who was apparently the first to use it of a party cry in politics. I have a vague impression that its popular use for a catchword sufficiently stentorian to drown argument or criticism is of American origin. Most contemporary English is.

The earliest dictionary in which I have found *slogan* is Worcester's (1860). He explains it as a corruption of "Slug home!" One has heard of a "home-thrust," and also of the American camp-preacher who translated the Biblical words "they left beating of Paul" (Acts xxi. 32) into the homelier vernacular "they quit slugging Paul." Worcester, I may remark, was an American.

[1] Occasionally, when clans combined, the name of the rendezvous was substituted. A plausible reason for this will occur to anyone who reads ch. 7 of A Legend of Montrose.

The Border form *sloggorn* misled Chatterton, who took it for the name of a kind of trumpet, and added it to his collection of sham antiques. It occurs more than once in his Battle of Hastings:

> Some caught a slughorne and an onsett wounde;
> Kynge Harolde hearde the charge and wondred at the sounde.

This absurdity was copied by Browning, whose capacity for perpetrating verbal howlers was almost inspirational:

> Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set
> And blew, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."

Spick-and-span

Dr. Johnson did not love monosyllables. His explanation of *spick-and-span* is characteristic: "This word I should not have expected to have found authorized by a polite writer. *Span-new* is used by Chaucer, and is supposed to come from *spannan*, to stretch. *Span-new* is therefore originally used of cloth new extended or dressed at the clothiers, and *spick-and-span* is newly extended on the *spikes* or tenters. It is, however, a low word." On which Horne Tooke remarks disagreeably "In *spick-and-span* there is nothing stretched upon spikes and tenters but the etymologist's ignorance." The critic then proceeds, "In Dutch they say *spikspelder-niew*. And *spyker* means a warehouse or magazine. *Spil* or *spel* means a spindle, *schiet-spoel*, the weaver's shuttle; and *spoelder*, the shuttle-thrower. In Dutch, therefore, *spikspelder-niew* means new from the warehouse and the loom." This is, of course, even worse nonsense than Johnson's.

The oldest English expression is Mid. Eng. *span-new*, in which *span* means chip, splinter, with a suggestion of clean-cut white wood :

> This tale ay was span-newe to biginne,
> Til that the night departed hem a-twinne.
>
> (Chauc. Troilus, iii. 1665.)

Alternative words were *brand-new* and *fire-new*, both of metal fresh from the furnace or the mint. Shakespeare uses the latter several times :

> Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
> Despite thy victor-sword and fire-new fortune,
> Thy valour and thy heart—thou art a traitor.
>
> (Lear, v. 3.)

A similar idea is perhaps contained in Fr. *tout battant neuf*, as though new from the anvil or the stamping-die. The usual German word is *funkelnagelneu*, lit. sparkle-nail-new. Earlier we find "*nagelneu* : brand-new, fire-new, spick-and-span new" (Ludwig, 1716). This brings us to the *spick* of *spick-and-span new*, now reduced to *spick-and-span*.

Spick is not an English word. It was adapted, probably in the 16th century, from the *spik* of archaic Dutch "*spikspelder-niew*, spick-and-span new" (Sewel), which is formed from *spijker*, a nail, and *speld*,[1] a pin. We still say "as clean (*or* neat) as a new pin." With this intensification of *span-new* we may compare the curious variations recorded by the English Dialect Dictionary, viz. *brand-fire-new*, *brand-spander-new*, *brand-spankin'-new*, in the last of which *spankin'* is evidently a kind of portmanteau combination of *spick*

[1] Cf. Dutch *speldegeld*, pin-money. Before the 16th century this allowance was called in English simply "pins" ; cf. Fr. *épingles*, pin-money.

and *span*. These two monosyllables stand for the two ideas that run through all these odd compounds, viz. clean metal and clean wood.

Spindrift

No modern poet or romancer of the sea writes many pages without introducing this picturesque word. It came into English c. 1880, as a result of the popularity of William Black's novels (Macleod of Dare, A Princess of Thule, etc.), the complete deadness of which at the present day should inspire our contemporary best-sellers [1] with that humility that makes for righteousness. It is the Scottish form, usually *speendrift*,[2] of *spoondrift*, a nautical word recorded from the 18th century, and defined by Falconer [3] as "a sort of showery sprinkling of the sea-water, swept from the surface of the waves in a tempest, and flying according to the direction of the wind like a vapour." Falconer also tells us that spray "differs from *spoondrift*, as being only blown occasionally from the broken surface of a high wave, whereas the latter continues to fly horizontally along the sea, without intermission, during the excess of a tempest or hurricane."

Spoondrift is derived from the old verb to *spoon*, which "seems formerly to have signified that movement in navigation, which is now called 'scuding.' Be that as it may, there is at present no such phrase in our sea-language" (Falconer). Falconer's French contemporary Lescallier has *spoom* and *spoomdrift*,

[1] The *best-seller* comes from America, along with his antithesis the *back-number*.

[2] "Cliffy Mackay will either mak a speen or spill a guid horn" (James Hogg, 1838).

[3] Marine Dictionary, 1771.

which he derives from Lat. *spuma*, foam, explaining *spoon* as a corruption. This is repeated by Skeat. The Elizabethan tars[1] did not adopt their speech from Latin, and *spoon* is the older form of the word, common in Hakluyt and Purchas, while the later *spoom* is a landlubber's "correction." The stock 16th-century phrase is to "spoon before the wind." This calls up a picture of Coleridge's "sloping masts and dipping prow," and suggests that it is simply a case of the vessel appearing to "spoon" up the water in its course.

Stalwart

"A few stalwarts," says the Times Literary Supplement (Jan. 20th, 1927), "have clung to Trollope through everything." This sense of *stalwart* (= uncompromising adherent) comes from the United States. It is said to have been thus used for the first time in 1877, by J. G. Blaine, in reference to those Republicans who refused to forget their old grudge against the South. It is now a commonplace (= *die-hard*[2]) in English politics, but the above quotation from the Times Literary Supplement is the first instance I have noted of its application to literary hero-worship.[3]

Stalwart is a great word. It combines the ideas of "brawny" and "sinewy," avoiding that implication of beefiness which clings to "burly," and it fits the English policeman like a glove. We owe it, with so many other great words, to Scott. Anglo-Saxon had an adjective *stæl-wierthe*, serviceable, the first element

[1] *Tar*, sailor, is an abbreviation of *tarpaulin* (p. 85, *n*. 2).

[2] Originally Middlesex regiment (old 57th) at Albuera (1811).

[3] *Hero-worship* was originally used of the worship by the ancients of deified national heroes. Its current sense dates from Carlyle's essay (1840).

of which, cognate with *stand*, is possibly contracted from *stathol*, foundation, stability, while the second is our *worth*. In Mid. English *stalworth* had the general sense of sturdy, steadfast, valiant, etc. In a commentary on Exodus xv. 1–19 attributed to Wyclif we read, "Thoru him we ben stalworthe to stonde." It became archaic in the 16th century, and then disappeared from literature. It is not in Shakespeare or the Authorized Version, and is, in fact, unrecorded between c. 1600 and Scott's Marmion: "A stalworth knight and keen." Probably it survived, colloquially, as *stalwart*, in northern dialect, but it was no doubt in Barbour or Henry the Minstrel that Scott discovered it. Here, as in many other cases (cf. *bluff*, p. 83), not only the currency, but also the accepted meaning of the word has been definitely fixed by Scott. In early Scottish poetry *stalwart* is of very wide application, e.g. it is used in describing castles, ramparts, storms, etc., and is especially common in the phrase "stalwart stour," i.e. a bonny fight. It was Scott who gave it the specially muscular association which is now usual.

Somewhat germane to the matter is the change that has taken place in the use of the word *thews*. Anglo-Sax. *thēaw*, habit, custom, acquired in Mid. English the sense of mental or moral quality. This meaning is still in Spenser:

> From mother's pap I taken was unfitt
> And streight deliver'd to a Fary Knight
> To be upbrought in gentle thewes and martiall might.
> (Faerie Queene, I. ix. 3.)

Shakespeare uses *thews* of the general bodily constitution, what we should now call *physique*. So Falstaff,

choosing his recruits: "Will you tell me, master Shallow, how to choose a man? Care I for the limbs, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man? Give me the spirit, master Shallow" (2 Henry IV, iii. 2).

After Shakespeare the word became obsolete. It occurs, as a deliberate archaism, in Cowper and Southey, but its restoration is really due to Scott, who often couples it with "sinews." This collocation has now become regular and has brought about a change in the meaning of the word, which is now practically equivalent to brawn, muscle.

Star-chamber

In 1488 Henry VII set up a kind of judicial committee of the Privy Council, which, from its place of meeting, in the royal palace of Westminster, was called the Court of Star-chamber. The King's chief object was to be able to deal with recalcitrant nobles without the intervention of a jury. Under the Stuarts the *Star-chamber* became an instrument of tyranny, with great powers in the direction of whipping, nose-slitting, etc. It was abolished in 1641 by the Long Parliament, the name surviving as a creepy symbol of that kind of secret cruelty that is associated with such words as Inquisition or Cheka.

The real and obvious origin of the name was long obscured by the authority of the great jurist Blackstone († 1780), who derived it from the Hebrew *s'ḥṭār*, a writing, covenant, etc. Thomas Pennant, the traveller and archæologist, writes in 1790, "That court of justice, so tremendous in the Tudor and part of the Stuart reign, the 'star-chamber,' still keeps its name; which was not taken from the 'stars' with

which its roof is said to have been painted (which were obliterated even before the reign of Queen Elizabeth), but from the *starra* (Hebrew *shetar*) or Jewish covenants, which were deposited there by order of Richard I." This etymology was in vogue when I was at school, and is still put forward dubiously in Low & Pulling's Dictionary of English History (1911).

Modern research has justified the earlier authorities. Sir Thomas Smith († 1577) tells us, in his Respublica Anglorum, that the members of the tribunal " doe sit in a place which is called the ' starre-chamber,' eyther because it is full of windowes, or because at the first all the roofe thereof was decked with images of starres gilted." In the Act which established it, the court is called " camera stellata," and this name for the room in which the Privy Council met is recorded as early as 1355. It was also called " la chambre esteilée *or* des esteiles " in Anglo-French of the same period, while in English of the late 14th century it is the " sterred chambre." [1]

Stark-naked

We sometimes describe people or conduct as " stark staring mad," a phrase which is a curious example of word-association. We start with *stark-blind*, apparently altered, by analogy with other expressions in which *stark* means completely, absolutely, from *stare-blind*, which became obsolete in Mid. English. This is Anglo-Sax. *stærblind*, a Common Teutonic compound, of which the first element means rigid (cf. our verb to *stare*, Ger. *starr*, stiff, *star*, cataract of the eye). In early Tudor English we find *staring blind*, with obscure

1 See communication by Mr. R. J. Whitwell to Notes and Queries, March 13, 1915.

proverbial allusions to the difference between *staring blind* and *stark blind*, by analogy with which a similar distinction (whatever it may have been) was established between *staring mad* and *stark mad*. The two words were combined, as early as the 16th century, in the phrase with which we are now familiar, e.g. Udall uses "stercke staryng madnesse" in reference to Luke vi. 11.

Stark, strong, is an adjective common to the Teutonic languages. In English only it has also the prevailing sense of stiff, rigid (the verb to *starch* is derived from it). It is very common in Mid. English as a personal epithet (= strong, grim, formidable, etc.). This use, revived by Scott in his description of William of Deloraine, a "stark, moss-trooping Scot" (Lay, i. 21), seems to have died out before the age of Shakespeare, who uses the adjective *stark* three times only, and in each case in allusion to the rigidity of death, while it does not occur at all in the Authorized Version.

Shakespeare has, however, numerous examples of the adverbial force of *stark*, as in modern *stark-mad*, *stark-naked*. This use is well recorded from the 15th century onward, the *stark* of *stark-dead* having apparently been felt almost as a mere intensifying adverb.[1] In modern English we even find such combinations as "stark impossible," "stark contradictory," etc.

The most familiar collocation, *stark-naked*, is an alteration, due to the intensive use of *stark* in so many other compounds, of Mid. Eng. *start-naked*, which occurs in Layamon and many later texts, and has sometimes been "corrected" to *stark-naked* by modern editors. *Start* is Anglo-Sax. *steort*, tail, its cognates

[1] Cf. Fr. *fort*, very, lit. strong. Sherwood (1650) renders "fort mauvais" by "stark naught."

in the other Teutonic languages being applied to what Heine delicately calls " der körperteil, wo der rücken aufhört, einen anständigen namen zu führen." It survives in the name of the bird called a *redstart*. *Ploughstart*, ploughtail, was in use up to the 16th century, and the corresponding Dutch *ploegstaart* gave its name (probably from shape) to a Flanders wood which will live in history as Plug Street.

Stepmother

She has always had a bad press. Gr. *μητρυιὰ νεῶν*, stepmother of ships, means a rocky and dangerous coast. Tacitus speaks of *odia novercalia*, i.e. " the accustomed hatred of stepmothers to their husbandes children " (Cooper). In dialect English a whitlow, or gathering on the finger, is known as a " stepmother's blessing." The Germans call the pansy *stiefmütterchen*, because its markings suggest a grim and angry face.[1] Ronsard is inspired by the faded rose to sing of " marâtre Nature," and Cotgrave quotes the proverb, " Qui a marâtre[2] a le diable en l'âtre."

It was as a result of the unfavourable sense attached to *marâtre* that French coined *belle-mère*,[2] in the 15th century, as a complimentary title for both the stepdame and the mother-in-law. It is probable also that *mother-in-law*,[3] occurring in the sense of *stepmother* from about the date of *belle-mère* down to the time of Mr. Weller, owed this incorrect sense to a similar instinct.

[1] Cf. synonymous Dan. *stedmorsblomst*, and, for a more elaborate and fanciful interpretation of the name, see Falk & Torp, p. 1154.

[2] It is possible that the Vulgar Lat. *matraster*, whence the French word, may have come into use as a euphemistic substitute for the ill-omened *noverca*.

[3] The *mother-in-law* was as essential to the old music-hall programme as the *stepmother* was to Victorian melodrama.

The " -in-law " compounds, which have no continental parallels, came into use in the 14th century. The " law " is the Canon law, with the implication that " -in-laws " do not come within the degree of affinity which makes marriage illegal.

The evil repute of the *stepmother* appears in a 17th-century explanation of the first syllable as meaning cruel. Johnson, who gives the correct derivation, from Anglo-Sax. *stēop-*, remarks, " As it is now seldom applied but to the mother, it seems to mean, in the mind of those that use it, a woman who has ' stepped ' into the vacant place of the true mother." A somewhat similar idea is responsible for the replacing in modern Danish of *stif-* by *sted-*, i.e. stead, place, in this group of compounds. The prefix is Common Teutonic,[1] e.g. Dutch and Ger. *stief-*, Old Norse *stjūp-*. It is recorded as an independent word in Old Norse *stjūpr*, stepson. As Anglo-Sax. *stēop-* is related to *āstiēpan*, to bereave, it is probable that the original application of the prefix was to orphans (Anglo-Sax. *stēopbearn* and *stēopcild*) rather than to ersatz parents ; cf. Lat. *privignus*, stepson, from *privare*, to bereave.

Swan-song

The belief that swans sing before death is very old. Gr. *κύκνος*, a swan, is used figuratively of a poet. Æschylus refers to the legend :

> ἥ δέ τοι κύκνου δίκην
> τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον
> κεῖται.[2]
>
> (Agamemnon, 1443.)

[1] Though not recorded in Gothic.

[2] But she having sung like the swan the last sad strain of death, lieth . . .

and Horace (Carm. iv. 2. 25) applies to Pindar the name "Dircæus cycnus," from the fountain of Dirce, in Bœotia. Chaucer alludes to the *swan-song* at the end of Anelida and Arcite:

> But as the swan, I have herd seye ful yore,
> Ayeyne his deeth shal singen his penaunce,
> So sing I here. (l. 346.)

So also Shakespeare, Jonson's "Sweet Swan of Avon":

> What did thy song bode, lady?
> Hark! Canst thou hear me, I will play the swan,
> And die in music. (Othello, v. 2.)

The idea is old in French also. Cotgrave has "*chanter l'hymne du cigne*: to sing his last," and Buffon says, "Toujours, en parlant des dernières heures d'un beau génie qui s'éteint, on dira: 'C'est le chant du cygne.'"

It is strange, considering the venerable age and wide diffusion of this poetic convention, that we should have had to wait till the 19th century for *swan-song*. It was adapted by Carlyle, in describing the death of the phœnix (Sartor Resartus, iii. 7), from Ger. "*schwanengesang*: the singing of a swan; the contentedness and fine sayings of a dying person" (Ludwig, 1716), which has been traced back to the early 16th century.

Sweepstake

Various opinions are held as to the exact meaning of the question addressed to Laertes by the King:

> Good Laertes,
> If you desire to know the certainty
> Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
> That, sweepstake,[1] you will draw both friend and foe,
> Winner and loser? (Hamlet, iv. 5.)

[1] Old editions have *soopstake*, for *swoopstake*, *swoop* being a variant of *sweep*. The cry "Soop!" is still familiar to Scottish curlers.

It is usually taken as an adverb (= indiscriminately), but it is quite possibly a noun (that you, a sweepstake, will . . .).

It is simplest to trace the history of this word backwards. Everyone who has cherished dreams of attaining a genteel competency by the purchase of a ticket knows what is meant by a *sweepstake*, now more commonly *sweep*, but this sense dates only from the latter part of the 18th century. An earlier meaning was the act of making a "clean sweep." Archbishop Williams, in Cromwell's day, writes of a "general sweepstake of archbishops, bishops, parsons, vicars." The earliest meaning of all is he who sweeps all away, wins all the stakes, which is possibly the meaning in Hamlet (v. s.). It is common as a ship-name from the 15th to the 17th century. I do not know how long the name survived. Pepys (June 4, 1666) mentions the Sweepstakes as having been in action with the Dutch, and Chamberlayne's Present State of England [1] still gives it as the name of a fourth-rate,[2] of 48 guns, in the Navy List for 1692.

Lexicography has suffered in the past from the almost complete disregard of the study of surnames. The literary records of the Middle Ages contain but scanty traces of the colloquial and slangy elements in the language. It is in the personal nicknames, preserved in overwhelming numbers in official Rolls, that we must look for the more unceremonial every-day speech of our ancestors. Much older than the earliest record of the common noun *sweepstake* is the name of Robert Swepstak in the Yorkshire Poll-Tax list of 1379. The name was no doubt acquired in the same

[1] A kind of 17th-century Whitaker.

[2] *First-rate, second-rate*, etc. were purely nautical terms until the 19th century.

way as the French surname Prentout (= prends tout), which still flourishes. In my Surnames [1] I ventured to say (p. 22) that " a complete dictionary of English surnames would not only form a valuable supplement to the N.E.D. (i.e. the Oxford Dictionary), but would in a great measure revolutionize its chronology." In Discovery, January 1921, I published a short article illustrating the same thesis. From this I will take one example. Our colloquial verb to *lump*, now used only in the expression to "like or lump" a thing, is first recorded by the Oxford Dictionary for 1577. The Patent Rolls for 1307–13 record the existence of Matilda Lumppejoye, evidently contrasting in temperament with the ancestors of the still numerous Lovejoys.

Tenter-hooks

"'Mrs. Corney,' said Mr. Bumble, stooping over the matron, 'what is this, ma'am? Has anything happened, ma'am? Pray answer me. I'm on—on——' Mr. Bumble, in his alarm, could not immediately think of the word 'tenter-hooks,' so he said 'broken bottles'" (Oliver Twist, ch. 27). Discreet inquiry reveals the fact that most people who speak of being " on tenter-hooks " follow Mr. Bumble's interpretation, and associate the phrase with something spiky and a sitting posture. They regard the experience as akin to being " on thorns." Byron apparently associated *tenter-hooks* with angling :

> At present I am glad of a pretence
> To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
> And keeps the atrocious reader in suspense;
> The surest way for ladies and for books,
> To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.
>
> (Don Juan, xiv. 97.)

[1] Murray, 1916, second edition 1917.

Being "on tenter-hooks" is really a parallel to being "on the rack." *Tenter* is an old technical word for a stretching apparatus used to prevent cloth from warping or shrinking after being milled. Formerly the process was carried on out of doors. There are still in London three Tenter Streets, "all associated with former fields or open spaces, where the cloth-workers had their tenters or frames for stretching cloth" (Miss G. B. Rawlings, The Streets of London). The Oxford Dictionary traces *tenter* back to the 14th century, and, curiously enough, the earliest quotation suggests the current figurative use: "Whon the Jewes hedden thus nayled Crist on the cros as men doth cloth on a teyntur" (Hampole). Variant readings of the passage give *streynour* and *rakke*,[1] and the latter (*rack*) was at one time often used in the same sense by clothworkers, though, in this case, the "torture" sense is rather the older in English.

Tenter is obviously connected with Fr. *tendre*, to stretch, but the Oxford Dictionary objects that there is no record in Old French or Anglo-French of a noun *tentour*, stretcher, while Fr. *tenture* means the act, or result, of stretching, not the agent. The difficulty may be solved by considering a sense of *tenter* which the Dictionary has failed to notice. Some years ago, looking over a dismantled manor-house, I noticed rows of hooks projecting from the bare walls just below the ceiling. On enquiry I was told that they were the *tenter-hooks* on which the tapestry was formerly strained. The Accounts of the York Merchant Adventurers include, for 1490, the item, "Pro le tenter-hukes, pro le hangynges, et pro le candeles in dictam capellam," which is conclusive as to this use of the

[1] Probably of Dutch origin; cf. Dutch *rekken*, to stretch.

word, and points to derivation from Fr. "*tenture*: the hanging of, or a suit of hangings[1] for, a chamber" (Cotgrave, 1611).

Moreover, the earliest examples given by the Oxford Dictionary in the clothworker sense obviously apply to tapestry. The first is an entry of 200 *tentourhokes*, recorded in the Wardrobe Accounts of Edward IV. Even if the King did cloth-stretching as a side-line, he could hardly have needed so many *tenter-hooks* at one purchase. The preceding item is 500 *tapethokes*, which were certainly tapestry hooks, and this follows "Crochettes: off the moost assize, C; of the myddell assize, CCC; of the leest assize, DCC." Evidently hooks of various kinds were in great request in His Majesty's household. I suspect that they are all connected with the purchase, noted in the same summary for the year, of arras to the extent of nearly 200 Flemish ells "of the story of Parys and Eleyn."

When distinguished visitors were accommodated at the Cold Harbour,[2] it was usual to send hangings to

[1] Paper "hangings" began to be substituted for tapestry at the end of the 17th century. We still describe the man who sticks them on as a *paper-hanger*: "I have heard the fame of paper-hangings, and had some thought of sending for a suit" (Lady M. Montagu, 1749).

[2] This name is very frequently, and very unnecessarily, discussed. Its origin is quite well known, and it means what it appears to mean, viz. a place supplying shelter and nothing else. Miss Rawlings, in The Streets of London, very aptly compares the Indian "dak" bungalows for travellers. There are about seventy *Coldharbours* existing or recorded on our old roads, and probably as many *Caldecots*. *Harbour*, refuge, shelter, is Anglo-Sax. *here-beorg*, army shelter, which, though not recorded, is certified by Old High Ger. *heriberga* (now *herberge*) and Old Norse *herbergi* (whence Dan. *herberge*). The Teutonic word passed into the Romance languages, giving Old Fr. *herberge* (whence modern *héberger*, to shelter, harbour), It. *albergo*, Prov. *alberga* (whence Fr. *auberge*, Sp. *albergue*). The *Cold Harbour* alluded to above was a mansion in Thames Street

that establishment. In 1480 a vast number of tapet-hokes, *tentourhokes* and crochettes of various "assizes" were sent "to the Coldharber ayenst the commyng thider of my lady Duchesse of Bourgoine for the apparailyng of the logeing there."

The second example in the Oxford Dictionary, "For tayntyrhokes and ffor wachyng of the sepulture, xii d." (Records of St. Mary at Hill, 1492–3), points to the use of hangings in connection with funeral ceremonies or commemorations. Littré tells us, "Ce mot [tenture] désigne le plus souvent les pièces d'étoffe de deuil qui sont tendues, lors d'un convoi ou d'un service, dans l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'église ainsi qu'à la maison mortuaire." Further research would probably show that the tapestry sense of *tenter* preceded the cloth-stretching sense in English.[1]

The form is interesting. Fr. *-ure* regularly became *-er* in English. Thus *friture* gave *fritter*, *batture* gave *batter* (pudding), *bordure* gave *border*, and the archaic *tester*, canopy over a bed, is Anglo-Fr. *testure*, from Old Fr. *teste*, head: "ij couvrelitz, ove (= with) ij testures de double worstede" (Will of Alice de Nerford, 1394). An artificial spelling has altered the pronunciation of most of the *-ure* words, but, though it is considered vastly diverting to represent uneducated speech by the spelling *figger*, that is how we really pronounce *figure*. Enthusiasm for *-ure* has even sub-

which, at this time, was the property of the Crown, and was made habitable when guests were put up there. Among the alternative "etymologies" suggested is Fr. *col d'arbres*, whatever that may mean. What this "neck o' the woods" was doing in Thames Street is not explained.

[1] I should guess that hangings were used in England before the Flemish cloth-workers introduced their trade, and that the weavers simply took over *tenter-hooks* from the tapestry experts.

stituted *failure* for *failer*, originally an Anglo-French infinitive, *leisure* for *leysir*, Old Fr. *leisir* (now *loisir*); cf. also *treasure* (Fr. *trésor*) and *pleasure* (Fr. *plaisir*). In the 18th century all educated people pronounced *picture*, *nature*, etc., in the same way as Mrs. Gamp:

> Farewell, ungrateful traitor,
> Farewell, my perjured swain;
> Let never injured creature
> Believe a man again. (Dryden.)

Tuesday

It is curious that, while the Teutons took over with the Roman calendar the Latin names of the months,[1] they preferred to translate the names of the days of the week. These names were those adopted in Late Latin in place of the clumsy method of reckoning by ides and kalends. Our weekday names do not exactly correspond with those of other European nations. French rejected *solis dies* in favour of *dominicum* (*dimanche*[2]), while *samedi* perhaps results from a mixture of *sabbatum* and *septimum*. The early missionaries apparently succeeded in keeping the heathen *Woden* of *Wednesday* out of German, and named the day *Mittwoch*, midweek. Ger. *Samstag*, also called *Sonnabend*, Sun(day) eve,[3] comes in some

[1] This did not happen all at once, In German dialect may still be heard such native descriptions as *brachmonat*, fallow month (June), *heumonat*, hay month (July). Ger. *Dezember* was not finally accepted till the 17th century, before which the month was called *Christ-*, *hart-*, *wolf-*, or *winter-monat*. February is still sometimes called *Hornung* in German. This means bastard (brother of January).

[2] The Latin word gave *domenche*. The modern form is due to the influence of the *-di* (Lat. *dies*) of *lundi*, *mardi*, etc.

[3] Cf. Anglo-Sax, *sunnanæfen*.

way from *sabbatum*. It is interesting to note that in Old Norse *Saturday* was called *laugardagr* or *thvāttdagr*, both of which mean "washing-day," [1] and that one of these is still the regular name for Saturday in the Scandinavian languages (e.g. Dan. *Lördag*). *Saturn* was the only Latin god we adopted, as did also Dutch and the Celtic languages.

Most of the names are obvious, e.g. *Thursday* and *Friday*, the days of the thunder-god and the goddess of love, render the Latin days of Jove (Fr. *jeudi*) and Venus (Fr. *vendredi*). *Friday* reminds us that feminine nouns had no genitive *-s*, so that we still say *Lord's day*, but *Lady day*.[2] The name which appealed most to the warlike Teutons was naturally *Martis dies*. They identified the Roman war-god with a deity much less familiar to us than Woden and Thor, but one whose name points to his having been regarded in the earliest times as a kind of Supreme Being and progenitor of mankind. Tacitus is our earliest authority for the name: "Celebrant carminibus antiquis, quod unum apud illos memoriæ et annalium genus est, Tuistonem [*var*. Tuisconem] deum terra editum et filium Mannum originem gentis conditoresque" (Germania, ii). In Anglo-Saxon he was *Tīw*, with which cf. Old Norse *Týr*, Old High Ger. *Zīo*. Corresponding to our *Tuesday* we find Dan. *Tirsdag*, Swed. *Tisdag*, Old High Ger. *Ziostag*, still current in Swabia as *Zistig*.

The name of this deity is cognate with Sanskrit *dēva-*, divine, and *Dyāus*, god of heaven; with Gr. Ζεύς (genitive Διός), Lat. *deus* and *divus*; also with *Juppiter*

[1] Not referring to laundry-work, but to "bath night," and especially to the weekly shampoo. *Laugar* is cognate with our *lather* and *lye*. So the Norse Saturday was "lather-day."

[2] Cf. *lady-bird*, *lady-smock*, etc., where *lady* stands for Our Lady's; also *Lady Chapel*.

(genitive *Jovis*), which corresponds to Gr. *Ζεῦ πάτερ*, father Zeus. The root is ultimately that of Lat. *dies*, light, day.

German had, by the 4th century, three separate names for the day, viz. the cognate of our *Tuesday*, now only in dialect (v. s.), the Bavarian *Ertag* or *Erchtag*, which contains the name of *Ἄρης*, the Greek god of war, and must have come up the Danube, and the usual *Dienstag*, with which cf. Dutch *Dingsdag*. This name, peculiar to German and Dutch, is derived from Thinxus, an epithet of Mars, which is recorded in an inscription of the early 3rd century on the Wall of Hadrian. The epithet comes from the Lombard *thing*,[1] tribal assembly, and describes the war-god as the head of the national council, in fact the president of the Teutonic Areopagus.

Turnpike

Mr. Weller senior, who had the cockney's objection to first syllables, once threatened, in a moment of depression, to keep a "pike": "Say good-bye to your father, Samivel. I dewote the remainder of my days to a pike" (Pickwick, ch. 56). We know from his philosophic conversation with Mr. Pickwick on the Ipswich coach that he regarded "pike-keepers" as disappointed men who "rewenge themselves on mankind by takin' tolls" (ib., ch. 22). The letter in which he announced the demise of the second Mrs. Weller is couched in the language of his calling: "Just as she wos a turnen the corner my boy she took the wrong road and vent down hill vith a welocity you never see and notvithstandin that the drag wos put

[1] See *hustings* (Words Ancient and Modern, p. 56).

on drektly by the medikel man it wornt of no use at all for she paid the last pike at twenty minutes afore six o'clock yesterday evenin" (ib., ch. 52). Mr. Weller alludes to those barriers at which, within the memory of many now living, tolls were regularly levied for the upkeep of the roads. We still use "turnpike road," or simply *turnpike*, for a main road. George Eliot describes Raveloe as "nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike."

Turnpike, like its former synonym *chevaux-de-frise*, was originally a military term. It is formed from *turn* and *pike*, in the sense of a heavy spear, and is recorded from c. 1420. The Gentleman's Dictionary (1705) has "*chevaux de frise* or *turnpikes*: spars of wood about a foot diameter, and ten or twelve long, cut into six faces, and bored through; each hole is armed with a short spike shod with iron at each end, about an inch diameter, 6 foot long, and 6 inches distant one from another, so that it points out every way, and is proper for stopping small overtures (= openings), or to be placed in breaches: they are likewise a very good defence against horse." Traditionally the *chevaux-de-frise*, still to be seen on the walls of prison-yards, were invented by the Netherlanders to make up for their lack of cavalry against the Spaniards. The Dutch name was *vriesse paerden*, Frisian horses, with which cf. archaic Ger. *friesische reuter* (= *reiter*, troopers). The beam revolved if the spikes were grasped.

The *turnpike* in its later and more pacific sense was apparently a 17th-century introduction. It had a central support on which it revolved horizontally and was in fact a turnstile. It is defined by Johnson as

" a cross of two bars armed with pikes at the ends, and turning on a pin, fixed to hinder horses from entering." Later it became the gate which some of us remember. The *turnpikes* have all disappeared from the public roads, but at many spots may still be seen the small buildings formerly inhabited by those morose officials of whom Mr. Weller says that, " If they was gen'lem'n you'd call 'em misanthropes."

Undertaker

A careless reader of Shakespeare might be inclined to mistake the meaning of *undertaker* as used by Iago, when, after suggesting to Othello that strangling Desdemona would be preferable to poisoning her, he continues, " And, for Cassio,—let me be his undertaker " [1] (Othello, iv. 1). For Shakespeare, to " undertake " a person was to take him on, settle his business : " It is not fit your lordship should undertake every companion [2] that you give offence to " (Cymbeline, ii. 1).

The Mid. Eng. *undertaker* was a helper, upholder, e.g. " The Lord is undertakere of my soule " (Wyclif, Ps. liv. 4) renders the Vulgate " Dominus susceptor est animæ meæ." In the 16th and 17th centuries an *undertaker* was specifically a man who " undertook " the management of Crown lands in Ireland or a contractor on a large scale. It was chiefly used in connection with projects for the reclamation of land : " *Undertakers* be such as are employed by purveyours of the king as their deputies and such as undertake

[1] In the only other passage where Shakespeare uses the word (Twelfth Night, iii. 4), it means busybody.

[2] *Companion* here = fellow (contemptuously).

any great worke, as drying of fennes, etc." (Cowel, 1637). By the end of the 17th century the *undertaker* was (1) an impresario, (2) a publisher, (3) a manager of funerals. The corresponding Fr. *entrepreneur* has become similarly limited, and now means usually a building or haulage contractor.

Another tradesman whose activities are not very clearly expressed by his title is the *stationer*. Mr. Snagsby, law-stationer, of Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, dealt "in all sorts of blank forms of legal process; in skins and rolls of parchment; in paper—foolscap, brief, draft, brown, white, whitey-brown, and blotting; in stamps; in office-quills, pens, ink, India-rubber, pounce, pins, pencils, sealing-wax and wafers; in red tape and green ferret; in pocket-books, almanacks, diaries and law-lists; in string boxes, rulers, inkstands—glass and leaden, penknives, scissors, bodkins, and other small office-cutlery" (Bleak House, ch. 10), which, barring the pounce [1] and the ferret,[2] is pretty much what every stationer sells to-day.

Med. Lat. *stationarius* meant a tradesman with a fixed station, as opposed to the itinerant dealer. In England, from the 13th century onward, the name was practically limited to the bookseller, originally the licensed bookseller of Oxford and Cambridge. Later he became a publisher or "undertaker." In the 17th century he began to come down in the world: "*stationer* (so called of his station or standing shop to sell in) is often confounded with bookseller, and

[1] A fine powder sprinkled over erasures to prevent the ink correction from running. Fr. *pierre-ponce*, pumice-stone.

[2] Narrow tape, originally with a flower pattern, It. *fioretto*. It was also called *floret*. "Green ferret" once had the same figurative sense as "red tape."

sometimes with book-binder ; whereas they are three several trades : the stationer sells paper and paper-books, ink, wax, etc. ; the book-seller deals onely in printed books, ready bound, and trimmed up ; and the book-binder binds them, but sells not. Yet all three are of the Company of Stationers" (Blount, 1656). The former dignity of the *stationer* is preserved in Stationers' Hall, where, until 1911, registration was necessary in order to secure copyright.

Unless

Some words automatically catch the eye of the word-hunter, while others, often equally interesting, are taken for granted and arouse no curiosity. To the latter class belongs *unless*, though, if one tries to give a rational meaning to a combination of the negative *un-* with *less*, one immediately feels that there is more in the word than meets the eye. The 17th century realized this. So Skinner (1679)—"*unless* : nisi, præter, præterquam, q.d. *one less*, i.e. uno dempto seu excepto ; vel potius ab A.S. *onlesan*, dimittere, liberare, q.d. hoc dimisso."

Horne Tooke, in his Diversions of Purley (1786, 1798), a book of great interest to the critical student of philology and one carefully to be kept from the neophyte, devotes a good deal of space to this word. He quotes very numerous examples of the older spelling with *on-*, and attempts to fix the approximate date of the *un-* form : "I believe that William Tyndall, our immortal and matchless translator of the Bible, was one of the first who wrote this word with a *u-* ; and, by the importance and merit of his works, gave course to this corruption in the language." It is, at any rate,

true that the *un-* spelling dates from the 16th century.

Horne Tooke's theory is that *onles* was originally the imperative[1] of Skinner's *onlesan*, to let go. This is, of course, quite out of the question. Mixing, according to his custom, etymological delusions with political hatreds, he says, "What *is* the adjective *less*? What *is* the comparative *less*? And what *is* the superlative *least*? I say, *What are* they? For that is the rational etymological question; and not, whence do they *come*? It is with words as with men. Call this Squire, my Lord; then he will be comparative. Call him by the new-fangled title of Marquis, or call him Duke; then he will be superlative. And yet whosoever shall trust him or have to do with him, will find to their cost that it is the same individual Squire Windham still. So neither is the substance or meaning or real import or value of any word altered by its grammatical class and denomination. The adjective *less* and the comparative *less* are the imperative of *lesan*; and the superlative *least* is the past participle."

Unless is for older *unless that*. The omission of *that* in compound conjunctions is characteristic of English. We now use *before*, *after*, etc., where French has *avant que*, *après que*, etc.; but, in the older language, the *that* is regularly present, as still occasionally in Biblical language: "Then the word of the Lord came

[1] Tooke's *idée fixe* was the derivation of practically all words from verbs. Sometimes he had a lucky inspiration, as when he pronounced the archaic adverb *eke*, also, to be an imperative (= add), a theory now generally accepted; but some of his equations, such as *head* from *heaved*, *odd* from *owed*, *wench*, one that is *winked* at, or the *bark* (of a dog) from Anglo-Sax. *beorgan*, to protect, because the *bark* "is that by which we are defended by that animal," make one dizzy.

to Jeremiah after that [so Wyclif and Coverdale] the king had burnt the roll" (Jer. xxxvi. 27). The phrase *on less that* is not found in literature before 1400, and the unstressed *on* was soon confused with the negative prefix *un-*. It is not till the 16th century that we find the simple *unless* without the following *that*, and the older construction is still used by Spenser:

> Ne would I gladly combate with mine host,
> That should to me such curtesie afford,
> Unlesse that I were thereunto enforst.
> (Faerie Queene, VI. iii. 39.)

The history of the word is elaborately traced by the Oxford Dictionary, which fails, however, to draw what seems the inevitable conclusion, viz. that *on less that* is simply a late Mid. English translation of Fr. *à moins que*.

Upshot

When I was working at my Etymological Dictionary (1921), I had not come across any earlier examples of *upshot* than those recorded by Johnson from Spenser and Shakespeare. The latter uses it in the sense of final issue, conclusion, while in Spenser it implies something like aim, goal:

> With whom he close confers with wise discourse
> Of Natures workes, of heavens continuall course,
> . . . . . .
> Of dreadfull battailes of renowned knights,
> With which he kindleth his ambitious sprights
> To like desire and praise of noble fame,
> The onely upshot whereto he doth ayme.
> (Mother Hubbard's Tale, l. 763.)

This, together with a passage in an old play of 1600 called Look About You—

> I (= aye) there's the but, whose hart-white [1] if we hit,
> The game is ours. Well we may rage and rove [2]
> At Gloster, Lancaster, Chester, Faukenbridge,
> But he is the upshot—

led me to suggest dubiously an original meaning of target, thing aimed at (in archery). This is not quite right. The history of the word has now been traced by the Oxford Dictionary, and somewhat earlier than the target sense is that of the deciding shot in an archery contest, though the force of the prefix is not very clear. The first record (1531) concerns 6/8 won from Henry VIII in a shooting match. The current sense did not develop till the 19th century, when all connection with archery had been lost.

Upside-down

Uncertainty as to the meaning of the elements forming a compound leads inevitably to variety of form. Probably no words illustrate this to a greater extent than *upside-down* and its companion *topsy-turvy*, which have reciprocally influenced each other. Of *upside-down* we find four types, viz. (1) *upsodown* (also *upsadown*, from northern *swa* = *so*), (2) *upset-down*, (3) *upsidedown*, and (4) *upsydown*, with several variants of each. The first is the original, well recorded from the 14th century: "He turnyde upsadoun (Tyndale and Coverdale, overthrew) the bordis of chaungeris and the chaiers of men sellynge cul-

[1] *Heart-white*, i.e. the heart considered as the centre of the target. See *point-blank* (p. 122).

[2] An old sense of *rove* is to take random shots with the bow.

veris [1] " (Wyclif, Matt. xxi. 12). The second and third are folk-etymology, and the fourth is due to the influence of *topsy-turvy*.

It is supposed that the *so* of *up so down* means " as if," but this is not certain. Practically all languages have synonymous expressions, e.g. Dutch *het onderste boven* (the " underest " above), and Fr. " *sens dessus dessous* [2] : arsie varsie, topsie turvie, top over tayle, upside downe " (Cotgrave). In the French phrase, with which cf. obsolete " *sens devant derrière :* the wrong end forward ; the inside outward ; the cart before the horses ; cleane kamme " (Cotgrave), *sens* is said to be a perverted spelling of Old Fr. *cen*, a nasalized form of *ce*, this, q.d. this above below.

Topsy-turvy, which is not recorded till two centuries later, has a still more bewildering tangle of variants, some, e.g. *topsetturvy* and *topsideturvy*, influenced by those of *upside-down*, while *topside-th'other-way*, found as early as Holinshed, is an etymologizing perversion, confidently asserted by Trench (Study of Words) to be " the original form of the phrase." The favourite 18th-century etymology is Bailey's " *tops in turfs*, i.e. heads on the turfs or the ground " (1736), which is due to the inventiveness of Skinner (1671). The Scottish forms display a still more lyrical freedom :

> But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
> My arms about my dearie, O ;
> An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
> May a' gae tapsalteerie, O !
>
> (Burns.)

The oldest spelling is *topsy-turvy* (better *tervy*),

[1] This old name for a pigeon survives in the surname Culverhouse.

[2] Cotgrave prints *sens dessous dessus*.

which Palsgrave (1530) renders *cen*[1] *dessus dessouds*. The first element is no doubt from *top*, the -*s*- being due to the influence of *upsodown* ; the second may be from the obsolete verb *terve*, which survived up to the 15th century in the compound *overterve*. This was often written *overterne*, by association with *turn*. In the 16th and 17th centuries we even find a verb to *topsyturn*. Sylvester (1616), in his Jonas, writes of—

> The furious waves
> All topsie turn'd by th' Aeolian slaves.

Wanton

All writers on words are tempted to compare the uncertainty of word-life with that of human life and to wonder why one is taken and another left. It is possible to give a reasonable explanation of the ordinary phenomena of linguistic growth, but linguistic decay remains very much of a mystery. We cannot even say that the verbal struggle for life results in the survival of the fittest, for it is often the most expressive and most vigorous terms that disappear from the literary language, to linger for a time in the dialects and then drop quite out of use. The same mystery attends the fate of prefixes and suffixes. We have noted the amazing development at the Renaissance period of the prefix *self-* (p. 143) and the disappearance of the useful suffix *-meal* (p. 114). The word *answer* is the only[2] English survival of a Teutonic prefix still very flourishing in German as *ent-* and cognate with Lat. *anti* and Gr. *ἀντί*. It is Anglo-Sax. *andswarian*,

[1] Misprinted *ceu* by Génin.
[2] *Along* may represent Anglo-Sax. *andlang* or *gelang*.

to swear back, with which cf. Lat. *respondere*, to pledge in return. The original strong sense survives in legal language. In *midwife* we have the only instance of Anglo-Sax. *mid*,[1] with, cognate with Ger. *mit*. The term means woman (cf. *fishwife*) standing by; cf. Ger. *beifrau* and Lat. *obstetrix*, from *obstare*, to stand over against.

A prefix common to the Teutonic languages is the *wan-* of *wanton*. There are still about a dozen Danish words in *van-*, while Dutch has less than half a dozen in *wan-*. German has two only, and *wanton* is the sole English survivor. The prefix means "lacking." It is related to *want*, probably also to *wane* and to Lat. *vanus*, empty. We find it in Ger. *wahnsinn*, madness, for older *wahnwitz*, in which, by folk-etymology, *wahn*, delusion (p. 110), has been substituted for the true prefix.

Anglo-Saxon compounds in *wan-* are pretty numerous, but only one of them, *wanspēd*, ill speed, poverty, survived into the Mid. English period, the rest being displaced by *un-* forms. *Wan-* seems, however, to have kept its vitality in the north and to have formed new compounds, the most widely used of which is *wanchancy*, uncanny, ill-omened, etc., common in Scottish vernacular literature:

> Wae worth that man wha first did shape
> That vile, wanchancie thing—a rape![2]
> It maks guid fellows girn an' gape
> Wi' chokin' dread.
>
> (Burns, Puir Mailie's Elegy.)

[1] The replacement of this word by *with*, which meant against, in opposition to (e.g. *withstand*), is curious. The *mid-* of other compounds means "middle," e.g. *midshipman*, originally stationed amidships, or *midriff* from Anglo-Sax. *hrif*, belly.

[2] Rope.

Of several Mid. English formations in *wan-* which have had a literary life the most familiar is *wanhope*, despair (cf. Dutch *wanhoop*). This is used by Chaucer :

> Wel ought I sterve [1] in wanhope and distress ;
> Farwel, my lif, my lust and my gladnesse.
>
> (A. 1249.)

and is abundantly recorded, in its proper sense, up to the middle of the 16th century, after which it is wrongly read as *wan* (= faint, feeble) *hope* and misused accordingly. It is not found in Shakespeare or the Authorized Version, and became obsolete in the 17th century.

Wanton represents Mid. Eng. *wantowen*, or an unrecorded Anglo-Sax. *wantogen*, the second element being the past participle of *tēon*, to drag, draw, which, like its German cognate *er-ziehen*, meant also to educate. *Wantowen* had a rival *untowen*, with which cf. Ger. *ungezogen*, naughty. It is impossible to say why in this one case *wan-* successfully withstood the pressure of *un-*, but its isolated survival provided a puzzle for the early etymologists, and gave Minsheu (1617) the opportunity for one of his most imaginative explanations : "*wanton*, quasi *want one*, i.e. carens uno vel una." Perhaps its resistance to analysis fitted it to receive a great many shades of meaning and made it a favourite with Shakespeare, who employs it in every sense from frolicsome to lascivious. In the Authorized Version it is always connected, as by Minsheu, with impudicity, but the earlier translators used it more freely, e.g. the "backsliding heifer" of Hosea iv. 16 is in Coverdale a "wanton cow."

[1] Die.

Welcome

In etymology, as in other matters, the obvious is not always right. The analogy of Fr. *bienvenu* and It. *benvenuto* suggests that *welcome* is simply *well come*, but this is not the exact truth. The Anglo-Saxon form of the word was *wilcuma*, one coming according to "will," i.e. an acceptable guest. This was also used as an adjective, and gave birth to a verb, By the end of the 12th century the true form *wilcome* had to compete with the new *welcome*, a corrupted form no doubt due to the existence of the corresponding French phrase among the bilingual part of the population.

It would appear that all the Teutonic nations had originally the compound in "will" contrasting with the Romance compound in "well." Modern German keeps the original *willkommen*, but Dutch *welkom*, Dan. *velkommen* and Swed. *välkommen* show the same popular change as English. This must have occurred early in Scandinavian, as it appears already in Old Norse. The *wil-* form is still used in the south of Holland.

Welcome and *farewell* correspond to the *ave* and *vale* of the Romans. The early Latin dictionaries render *vale* by "farewell, God be with you," but originally *farewell* sped the parting guest, who replied with "God be with you."[1] *Farewell*, now mostly replaced by *so-long* or *toodle-oo*, preserves the *fare* which was once a pivotal word of the language. We still have *thoroughfare*, earlier spelt also *throughfare*, and it is at least possible that the *fairway* which the golfer has borrowed from the navigator has also been asso-

[1] This became *God b'wye* and so *good-bye*.

ciated with *fare*. Then we have the picturesque *wayfaring* and *seafaring*, and *warfare*, which has now quite lost its original sense of an expedition: "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?" (1 Cor. ix. 7); but the simple form of the word is now limited to a prosaic association with tickets. When the most adventurous of the minor prophets got to Joppa, "He found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof and went down into it" (Jonah i. 3). Here the Authorized Version has hardly improved on Coverdale's, "He payde the fare and wente aborde."

When one said *farewell* to the parting guest, one expressed a wish for his *welfare*. At one time the two were used almost indifferently. The good ship in which Captain John Strong sailed in 1698 as a privateer to the South Seas was called both the *Welfare* and the *Farewell*. *Welfare* has now become what Mr. Fowler calls a "vogue-word." It is interesting to find that in this capacity (child welfare, miners' welfare, etc.) it first came into use in the early 20th century at Dayton, Ohio, which, as Mr. F.'s aunt might observe, is not Dayton, Tennessee, where Darwin is not liked.

Welladay

This interjection dates from the 16th century only. It is used several times by Shakespeare and has been a poetic favourite ever since. Probably its most familiar occurrence is in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner:

> **Ah! well a-day! what evil looks**
> **Had I from old and young!**
> **Instead of the Cross, the Albatross**
> **About my neck was hung.**

It is a corruption, due to the influence of *woe worth the day!* and *lackaday!* (*alack the day!*), of the much earlier *welaway*, which disappeared from use about the time that *weladay* came in. The older form was revived, after two centuries of disuse, by the 19th-century Romantics, who probably found it in Spenser:

> How ever may
> Thy cursed hand so cruelly have swayd
> Against that knight? Harrow[1] and well away!
> After so wicked deede why liv'st thou lenger day?
> (Faerie Queene, II. viii. 46.)

Here, as is so often the case, Spenser is imitating Chaucer:

> This John goth out, and fynt his hors away,
> And gan to crie, "Harrow!" and, "Weylaway!
> Oure hors is lorn."[2] (A. 4071.)

Neither form of the word has any connection with *well* or with *way* or *day*. All the Indo-European languages have a common interjection expressive of mourning, e.g. Lat. *vae*, Ger. *weh*, Dutch *wee*, Dan. and Swed. *ve* (Old Norse *vei*), Welsh *gwae*, etc. It is a natural cry of distress; cf. Fr. *ouais* and It. *guai*, which may be borrowed from Teutonic. The Anglo-Saxon form was *wā*, which has given our *woe*. From an interjection *woe* became a noun, the instrumental use of which survives in the curious *woebegone*, from the past participle of the obsolete verb *bego*, to encompass in hostile fashion:

> Wo was this wrecched womman tho begon.
> (Chaucer, B. 918.)

[1] This Old French cry for help (*haro!*) is of unknown origin. It is still used in the Channel Islands as a formal appeal for justice.

[2] The old past participle of *lose*; cf. *forlorn*.

From the simple *wā* Anglo-Saxon coined the lament *wā lā wā!* i.e. woe lo wo! This became Mid. Eng. *wolawo*, but gave way to the equally old *wei la wei*, in which the Old Norse form is substituted for the Anglo-Saxon. It is the latter which is represented by the archaic *welaway*. Both forms are recorded in Alfred's translation of Boethius, while in the Ancren Riwle the two are coupled: "Weilawei & wolawo," heo seith, "wo is me thet he, other heo, habbeth swuch word ikeiht."

Werwolf

It is difficult for a modern to realize what a place of terror the world was for the ancients and the Middle Ages, as it still is for children, savages, and the uneducated rich[1]:

> Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
> Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides?
> (Horace, Ep. II. ii. 208.)

Of all the superstitions which haunted primitive man, none is more widespread or more gruesome than that of the man-beast, whether *vampire* or *werwolf*.

The *vampire* does not, it is true, assume beast form, but it lives on human blood. The word reached Western Europe in the 18th century from Hungarian. Pegge, the famous antiquary, observes with some *naïveté*, "The accounts we have of the Hungarian vampires are most incredible." The Hungarian word is from Slavonic and the Slavs got it from Turkish. In our own day the name has been applied to a type of

[1] The frequenter of the doss-house has no objection to cubicle 13, but hotels and steamship companies that cater for the wealthy commonly omit this number from their rooms and cabins.

film-star, now usually *vamp*,[1] which apparently came into use too late for inclusion in the Oxford Dictionary.

The *werwolf* is a Common Teutonic possession. The etymological explanation given by Verstegan, in his Restitution of Decayed Intelligence (1605), is substantially correct: "*Were*[2] our anceters used somtyme in steed of *man*, yet should it seeme that *were* was moste comonly taken for a maried man. But the name of *man* is now more known and more generally used in the whole Teutonic toung then the name of *were*. *Werewulf*: this name remaineth stil known in the Teutonic & is as much as to say as *man-wolf*, the Greeks expressing the very lyke in *Lycanthropos* [Gr. λυκάνθρωπος, lit. wolf-man]. Ortelius, not knowing what *were* signified, because in the Netherlands it is now cleane out of use, except thus composed with *wolf*, doth misinterprete it according to his fancie. The *were-wolves* are certaine sorcerers, who, having anoynted their bodyes with an oyntment which they make by the instinct of the devil, and putting on a certaine inchanted girdel, do not only unto the view of others seeme as wolves, but to their own thinking have both the shape and nature of wolves, so long as they weare the said girdel. And they do dispose themselves as very wolves, in wurrying and killing, and moste of humaine creatures. Of such sundry

[1] Another *vamp*, part of a shoe, is really, despite its brevity, a compound word. It is short for *vampey*, Old Fr. *avant-pie*, front part of the foot. From it was formed a verb to *vamp*, to patch up (a boot, or a literary composition). By the 18th century this was used of "patching up" a musical accompaniment.

[2] This should be *wer*, a word of wider diffusion in the Aryan languages than *man* or *gome* (see p. 23). It is found in all the Teutonic languages, and is cognate with Lat. *vir*, Gaelic *fear*, Welsh *gŵr*, Sanskrit *vīra*. *Were* died out in early Mid. English, but survives historically in *wergild* (p. 16).

have bin taken and executed in sundry partes of Germanie and the Netherlands. One Peter Stump, for being a *were-wolf*, and having killed thirteen children, two women, and one man, was at Bedbur not far from Cullen in the yeare 1589 put unto a very terrible death. . . . He dyed with very great remorce, desyring that his body might not be spared from any torment, so his soule might be saved. The *were-wolf* (so called in Germanie) is in France called *loupgarou*."

A much earlier authority than Verstegan is quoted by Falk & Torp, s.v. *varulv* : " Vidimus enim frequenter in Anglia per lunationes homines in lupos mutari, quod hominum genus *gerulfos* Galli nominant, Anglici vero *werewolf* dicunt : *were* enim Anglice ' virum ' sonat, *ulf* ' lupum ' " (Gervase of Tilbury, 12th century). The Teutonic word passed into Old French as *garou*,[1] and, when the real sense of the word was obscured, was elaborated into " *loup-garou*[2] : a mankind wolfe " (Cotgrave, 1611).

The disappearance of the simple *were* led Mid. English writers to explain the first syllable as *ware*, and, as late as 1576, Turberville tells us, " Such wolves are called ' warwolves,' bicause a man had neede to be ware of them." A similar idea seems to account for archaic Ger. *wehrwolf*, associated with the cognate *wehren*, to protect, take heed.

Verstegan does not appear to recognize the superstition as one then existing in England. Although we went on burning witches and warlocks up to the 18th century, we appear to have found the *werwolf* too steep.

[1] Marie de France says, " Garwalf (? garwolf) l'apelent li Normand." Teutonic *w-* regularly becomes Fr. *g-* or *gu-*.

[2] Such explanatory phonasms are common ; cf. *sledge-hammer*, for earlier *sledge*, a hammer.

The Oxford Dictionary finds practically no record of the word in the 17th and 18th centuries. The superstition is not mentioned in Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares (1725) or in Brand's Observations thereon (1776). Our *werwolf* is, in fact, really the German word, re-introduced c. 1800 in connection with the craze for "Gothic tales" of the flesh-creeping type. Scott writes in 1816, of "all the German superstitions of nixies, oak-kings,[1] werwolves, hobgoblins, black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey" (Antiquary, ch. 25).

Wild-goose Chase

A *steeple-chase* was in the 18th century a *steeple-hunt*. I imagine (but only as a guess) that this cross-country gallop, with a distant steeple as the goal, was a kind of substitute for the real hunt when the fox was absent or reluctant. It has been adopted in French as *course au clocher*, in German as *kirchturm-rennen*. The Grand National is an elaboration of what was originally an extempore amusement. At one time cross-country foot-racing was also called *steeple-chasing*.

Much older than *steeple-chase* is *wild-goose chase*, which we now use only figuratively of an ill-judged and unproductive quest. It is so used by Shakespeare, our first authority for the phrase: "Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I have done; for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits

[1] He was probably thinking of the *erlking*, Ger. *erlkönig*, as though from *erle*, which means alder, not oak. *Erlkönig* is due to Herder's blunder in translating Dan. *ellerkonge*, which he associated with *elle*, alder, the elves being usually represented as lurking among the alders and willows by the misty brooks. It is really a corruption of *elverkonge*, king of the elves. Herder's Erlkönigs Tochter is a translation of the Danish ballad of Sir Oluf and the Erlking's Daughter.

than, I am sure, I have in my whole five" (Romeo and Juliet, ii. 4). While the *steeple-chase* had a defined goal, the *wild-goose chase* led nowhere in particular, the course being laid by the first horseman, and the others coming on behind in "follow-my-leader" fashion. I have not found it in any dictionary before Bailey (1736), who tells us that "to lead one a wild-goose chase" is "to amuse one with fair hopes." Johnson, who writes it all in one word, with the accent on *goose*, says it means the "pursuit of something as unlikely to be caught as the wildgoose."

Burton, after enumerating the "common recreations of the country folk," goes on to mention "riding of great horses, running at rings, tilts and turnaments, horse-races, wild-goose chases, which are the disports of greater men, and good in themselves, though many gentlemen, by that means, gallop quite out of their fortunes" (Anatomy, II. ii. 4). This "chase" is thus described in Nicholas Cox's Gentleman's Recreation (1674): "The wild goose chase received its name from the manner of the flight which is made by wild geese, which is generally one after another; so the two horses, after the running of twelve-score yards, had liberty, which horse soever could get the leading, to ride what ground he pleas'd, the hindmost horse being bound to follow him . . . and whichever horse could distance the other won the match."

Wiseacre

The workings of folk-etymology are mysterious. It is natural that a foreign and unfamiliar word should be twisted into something that looks native and familiar. Our great-grandfathers were more familiar with *sparrow-grass* than with *asparagus*: "'Sparrow-

grass' is so general that 'asparagus' has an air of stiffness and pedantry" (Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary, 1791). But why the *-acre* of *wiseacre*? I can only conjecture that it may have been suggested by the frequent occurrence of this word in familiar surnames, such as Goodacre,[1] Oldacre, Greenacre, etc., and especially Blackacre and Whitacre, once stock names for fictitious litigants.[2]

Wiseacre came to us from obsolete Dutch *wijsseggher*, as though "wise sayer." The first English lexicographer to list it is Blount (1656), who explains it as "one that knows or tells truth, but we commonly use it *in malam partem*, for a fool." It occurs, however, in Cotgrave (1611) as one of the equivalents of "*fol*: a foole; asse, goose, calfe, dotterell, woodcocke; noddie, cokes, goosecap, coxcombe, dizard, peagoose, ninnie, naturall, ideot, wisakers (sic)." Kilian (1623) gives the Dutch form as a synonym of "*waer-seggher* (= truth-sayer): augur, divinus, præsagus, fatiloquus, fatidicus, hariolus, vates, mantes, haruspex, exstipex, metascopus, chiromantis, chiromanticus, physiognomus," i.e. a general dealer in magic and spells. From the fact that it is not in Shakespeare we may infer that it was not in common use before the 17th century. In Phillips (1678) it is "vulgarly taken for a fool"; in Grose (1785) "a foolish conceited fellow."

The Dutch word is borrowed from Ger. *weissager*, from *weissagen*, to prophesy. This verb is also a product of very early folk-etymology. It is Old High Ger. *wīssagōn*, as though from *wīs*, wise, and *sago*, speaker, sayer, but it is really formed from Old High

[1] In such names *acre* = field.

[2] Widow Blackacre, in Wycherley's Plain Dealer, is a "petulant, litigious widow."

Ger. *wīzago*, prophet, which is cognate with Anglo-Sax. *wītega*, wise man, prophet, one who knows : " Thes is sōthlīce wītega, the on middangeard [1] cymth " (John vi. 14). Thus there is only a distant connection with *weise*, wise, and none with *sagen*, to say.

Ger. *weissager* is in sense equivalent to *wahrsager*, truth-sayer. The corresponding English word is *sooth-sayer*, from Anglo-Sax. *sōth*, true, which survives also in the archaic *forsooth*.[2] Hence also the verb to *soothe*, which we now associate with both literal and figurative syrup. Its earlier sense was to calm irritation by acquiescence, to interject the emollient " Yea, forsooth," which preceded the contemporary " Just so," " Quite right," etc. Falstaff describes Master Dombledow the draper as a " whoreson Achitophel, a rascally yea-forsooth knave " (2 Henry IV, i. 2). This is sometimes explained by commentators as characterizing the draper's vulgar phraseology, but there is no evidence that either *yea* or *forsooth* ever bore the stamp of vulgarity. As a picture of the obsequious tradesman, washing his hands with invisible soap and assenting [3] to all his patron's remarks, it is as effective as Mr. Chucks's impressionist sketch of a waiter : " A damned trencher-scraping, napkin-carrying, shilling-seeking, up-an-down-stairs son of a bitch." The association with Achitophel confirms this view, for the latter was pre-eminently one of those who, according to Lyly's Euphues, " soothe young youths in all their sayings, uphold them in all their doings."

[1] This Common Teutonic name for earth, the middle-dwelling (lit. yard) between heaven and hell, survived as *midden-erd* in Mid. English, and as *middle-erd* up to the 16th century in Scottish.

[2] Now usually ironical, but in Mid. English equivalent to the Biblical *verily*.

[3] Cf. Cooper's gloss for *assentator* (p. 102).

INDEX

ache, 19
a-gate, 140
alderman, 81, *n.* 2
alp (Ger.), 108
angel, 59
animadvert, 17
anon, 130, *n.* 2
answer, 175
anthem, 19
Apps, 2, *n.* 3
aspen-leaf, 1
atlas, 100, *n.* 1

back-number, 150, *n.* 1
banshee, 3
bantam, 88
barbadoes, 92
bard, 105
barn, 129
bas bleu (Fr.), 17
battant neuf (Fr.), 149
batter, 163
battledore, 15, *n.* 1
beanfeast, 6
bear-garden, 24, *n.* 2
beaufet, 9, *n.* 3
bedridden, 108
bed-tick, 54, *n.* 2
beefeater, 9
beetle-browed, 13
beetle-headed, 15
belle-mère (Fr.), 156
bell-wether, 137
bequeath, 110, *n.* 1
best-seller, 150, *n.* 1
Blackacre, 186
Black and Tans, 18
blackguard, 18
blackmail, 44
Black Prince, 83
blank, 122
blood-wite, 16
bluebottle, 19
Bluecoat School, 19, *n.* 1
bluegown, 19, *n.* 1
bluejacket, 85, *n.* 2
bluff King Hal, 83
boatswain, 42
bogtrotter, 37, *n.* 2
bombast, 68, *n.* 2
bond, 80
bone-head, 117, *n.* 3
bonfire, 19
bonhomme (Fr.), 82, *n.* 3
boor, 37
bootikins, 26
bootlegger, 21
border, 163
Borrow, 55, *n.* 2
borrowhead, 55
borsholder, 55
bout portant, à (Fr.), 123
brand-new, 149
bratenfresser (Ger.), 11
bridegroom, 22
browbeat, 15
brûle-pourpoint, à (Fr.), 123
bucket-shop, 24
bukkameli (Sard.), 102, *n.* 4
bulkhead, 39, *n.* 2
bumkin, 37
buskin, 26
but en blanc, de (Fr.), 123
butt-shaft, 123, *n.* 1

Caldecot, 162, *n.* 2
camera-conscious, 143, *n.* 1
Carfax, 27
carpet-bagger, 29
carrefour (Fr.), 28
case-hardened, 66
castaway, 30
catchword, 31
catsup, 62
cauchemar (Fr.), 109
chaffer, 89, *n.* 1
chamfer, 72, *n.* 1
chap, 35
Chapman, 35
charlatan, 106
charlock, 79, *n.* 1
châtelaine (Fr.), 82 *n.* 1
chawbacon, 37
cheap, 35
cheesemonger, 33
Chepstow, 35
chevaux-de-frise, 167
chilblain, 43
Chipping, 35
chiromancy, 114
chock-a-block, 99, *n.* 2
chockfull, 99, *n.* 2
chop, 36
chuckle-head, 99
church, 58
churl, 37
claptrap, 32
class-conscious, 143, *n.* 1
clodhopper, 36
clodpate, 37
clodpoll, 37
close-fights, 38
close-fisted, 38
close-quarters, 38
clown, 37
clublaw, 99
cocksure, 40
Coldharbour, 162, *n.* 2
Colin Clout, 45
commère (Fr.), 59
compère (Fr.), 59
Confessor, Edward the, 84
cordwainer, 27
country-dance, 53
coxcomb, 42
coxswain, 42
cratch, 46
Cremer, 117, *n.* 1
crosspatch, 43
cross-roads, 28
cross-way, 28
cue, 32, *n.* 2
cuider (Old Fr.), 111
Culverhouse, 174

cummer, 59, *n.* 1
cutter, 90

daffodil, 47
Danegeld, 16
dapple-grey, 46
débuter (Fr.), 123, *n.* 2
denkmal (Ger.), 115
devil, 59
die-hard, 151, *n.* 2
Dienstag (Ger.), 166
dimanche (Fr.), 164
dinghy, 90
Dingsdag (Dutch), 166
dirge, 87, *n.* 3
dismal, 48
donnerbart (Ger.), 79
dope-fiend, 117, *n.* 3
dustyfoot, 116

Easter, 58
Eccles, 58, *n.* 1
egg, 34, *n.* 2
egoism, 144, *n.* 1
eke, 171, *n.* 1
elend (Ger.), 74
elf, 108
elf-lock, 108
entrepreneur (Fr.), 169
Erchtag (Bav.), 166
erlking, 184, *n.* 1
Ertag (Bav.), 166
evangelie (Dutch), 58

failure, 164
fairway, 178
fare, 178
farewell, 178
fathead, 87, *n.* 4
faustrecht (Ger.), 99, *n.* 3
fernseed, 41, *n.* 2
ferret, 169
feu de joie (Fr.), 20
fingering, 72, *n.* 1
fire-new, 149
flat, 145
flitterwochen (Ger.), 78
folk-, 52
folkland, 50
folklore, 50
folkmoot, 50
forsooth, 187
foxglove, 52
frankincense, 55, *n.* 1
frankpledge, 54
Frederick, 54, *n.* 3
Freeborough, 55
free-lance, 130
freemason, 113, *n.* 1
freestone, 55, *n.* 1
freudenfeuer (Ger.), 20
Friday, 165
fritter, 163
froggy, 11, *n.* 1, 121
funkelnagelneu (Ger.), 149
fustian-anapes, 89

gadabout, 141
gadfly, 141, *n.* 1
gaffer, 60
galley-punt, 92
gallipot, 56
gammer, 60
garlic, 79, *n.* 1
Gee! whiz! 42, *n.* 1
gemini! 42
gevatter (Ger.), 59
Gip, 73, *n.* 2
gnarled, 13
Godbehere, 60
godfather, 57
godsend, 60
Goodacre, 186
good-bye, 178
goodman, 82
goodwife, 82
goody, 82
Goose, 44, *n.* 2
gospel, 58
gossip, 59
Gotthelf (Ger.), 60
grass-widow, 61
gravel-blind, 125
Greenacre, 186
grogram, 72, *n.* 1
grummet, 23
guinea-pig, 88

hag-ridden, 107, *n.* 2
handicap, 71, *n.* 1
harbour, 162, *n.* 2
hard-bitten, 67
Hardhorn, 129
headborough, 55
heimweh (Ger,), 74
heirat (Ger.), 81, *n.* 2
helpmeet, 64
Hengist, 110
hide-bound, 65
high-brow, 117, *n.* 3
high-flown, 67
highty-tighty, 73
hodge-podge, 69
hoity-toity, 71
homesick, 74
honeymoon, 77
Horsa, 110
horse-coper, 34, *n.* 1
horse-courser, 34, *n.* 1
hotch-potch, 70
Hotspur, 83
houseleek, 78
housewife, 82
hoyden, 72
husband, 80
husbandman, 79
hussif, 82
hussy, 82

Icemonger, 34
inchmeal, 114
-in-law, 157
Iremonger, 34
Ironmonger, 34
iron-mould, 115, *n.* 2
ironside, 83
Isemonger, 34

jackanapes, 85
jack-in-the-box, 138
jemine! (Ger.), 42, *n.* 1
jeudi (Fr.), 165
jolly-boat, 89
jolter-head, 99
joubarbe (Fr.), 79
Juppiter, 165

kaufmann (Ger.), 36
kauffahrteischiff (Ger.), 89, *n.* 1
kid, 93
kidnap, 92
kimmer, 59, *n.* 1
kinchin, 94, *n.* 1
Kingmaker, 83
knoblauch (Ger.), 79, *n.* 1

lackaday, 180
Lackland, 165
lady, 12
lady-bird, 165, *n.* 2
Lady Chapel, 165, *n.* 2
Lady day, 165
ladylike, 13
lady-smock, 165, *n.* 2
laird, 12, *n.* 1
launch, 90
learned, 52
leddy, 12, *n.* 1
leesome, 98
legerdemain, 94
Leighton, 79
leisure, 164
leman, 97
lewd, 52
lief, 97
limb-meal, 115

linden, 2
lion-hunter, 95
livelong, 97
lobster, 85
loggerhead, 98
logrolling, 29, *n.* 2
Longshanks, 83
lord, 12
Lördag (Dan.), 165
lordly, 13
lorn, 180
louche (Fr.), 124, *n.* 2
loupgarou (Fr.), 183
Lovejoy, 160
lubber-fiend, 11, *n.* 3
lump, 160
Lyndhurst, 2

Maddox, 45, *n.* 2
maelstrom, 100
maffick, 72
magister (Lat.), 113, *n.* 2
Mainprice, 55, *n.* 2
majolica, 57, *n.* 2
mal (Ger.), 115
manner, 130
mare, 109
market, 34
marktschreier (Ger.), 106
marraine (Fr.), 59
Marry come up, 73
marshal, 109, *n.* 1
massmonger, 35
match, 46
-meal, 115
mealy-mouthed, 101
Melmoth, 103
merchant, 34
merry-andrew, 105
mess, 61, *n.* 1
métier (Fr.), 113
midriff, 176, *n.* 1
midshipman, 176, *n.* 1
midwife, 176
mildew, 103
minister (Lat.), 113, *n.* 2
minstrel, 105
miscreant, 20, *n.* 2
mistery, 112
Mittwoch (Ger.), 164
monger, 34
-monger, 35
mosstrooper, 37, *n.* 2
mountebank, 104
mystery, 112

nab, 94
nail on the head, 123
neighbour, 37
newfangled, 128
newsmonger, 35
nightmare, 106
nostalgia, 76

oaf, 108, *n.* 1
obstetric, 176
Oldacre, 186
outrecuidance, 111
outspoken, 67
overweening, 110

packstaff, 118
pajock, 45
palmistry, 111
paper-hanger, 162, *n.* 1
paramour, 97, *n.* 2
parbleu (Fr.), 41
parboil, 124
parrain (Fr.), 59
patch, 45
patchcock, 45
pate (Ger.), 59
peet (Dutch), 59
Peggy, 69
pell-mell, 69
Pennefather, 87, *n.* 4
Peter's pence, 141
Pfingsten (Ger.), 58
pick-, 35, *n.* 1
pickthank, 35, 102
piecemeal, 114
Pie Corner, 120
piepowder, 116
pikestaff, 117
pin-money, 149, *n.* 1
pleasure, 164
Plug Street, 156
plum-pudding, 119
pock-pudding, 121
point-blank, 122
poke-bonnet, 120
poke-pudding, 120
Polly, 69
Potterne, 129
Potz (Ger.), 41
pounce, 169
powder-beef, 11, *n.* 2
presently, 130, *n.* 2
printing-house, 32, *n.* 1
pudding, 120
Pudding Lane, 120
purblind, 123
pussyfoot, 21, *n.* 1

quack, 106
quean, 6
quoth, 110

rack, 161
rackle, 127
rädelsführer (Ger.), 135
ragamuffin, 132, *n.* 1
ragman-roll, 131
rake, 126
rake-hell, 126
ramshackle, 128
ransack, 128
-rate, 159, *n.* 2
recreant, 139
recru (Fr.), 139, *n.* 1
redcoat, 85
redeless, 84
red-handed, 129
redstart, 156
renegade, 139
reprobate, 31
rigmarole, 130
ringleader, 134
roly-poly, 69
Romescot, 141
roost, 100
rosbif (Fr.), 121
round-robin, 137
roustabout, 141, *n.* 1
rubber-neck, 117, *n.* 3
rum-runner, 121
runagate, 138

saltern, 129
saltimbanque (Fr.), 106
samedi (Fr.), 164
sammy, 125, *n.* 4
samsodden, 125
Samstag (Ger.), 164
Samways, 126
sandblind, 124
Sansterre, 83
Saturday, 165
schnittlauch (Ger.), 79, *n.* 1
scot-free, 141
seafaring, 179
self-, 143
shilly-shally, 72, *n.* 1
shoot, whole, 141
shot, 141
shot-free, 142
Shurety, 55, *n.* 2
shuttlecock, 15, *n.* 1
sinngrün (Ger.), 79, *n.* 2
sledge-hammer, 183, *n.* 2
sleight, 94
slogan, 145
slug-horn, 148
sly, 94
small pox, 42, *n.* 2
Sonnabend (Ger.), 164

soop, 158, *n.* 1
soothsayer, 187
spade a spade, 119
sparrow-grass, 185
spick-and-span, 148
spindrift, 150
spirit away, 92
stalwart, 151
stalworth, 152
starch, 155
Star-chamber, 153
stark, 155
stark-naked, 154
stark staring mad, 154
start, 155
stationer, 169
steeple-chase, 184
stepmother, 156
stockdunkel (Ger.), 125, *n.* 1
stockstill, 125, *n.* 1
stone-, 125
strohwittwe (Ger.), 63
stump-speaker, 29
sündflut (Ger.), 79, *n.* 2
surly, 23, *n.* 2
surquedy, 111
swain, 42
swan-song, 157
sweepstake, 158

table-talk, 104, *n.* 2
tar, 151
tenterhooks, 160
tester, 163
tharborough, 55
thews, 152
thirdborough, 55
thoroughfare, 178
threshold, 137, *n.* 1
thridborough, 55
thoroughfare, 178
Thursday, 165
Tirsdag (Dan.), 165
Tisdag (Swed.), 165
tithingman, 55
toady, 95, *n.* 2
toff, 95, *n.* 2
tolbooth, 117
tolsey, 117
topsy-turvy, 174
tory, 4, *n.* 2; 37, *n.* 2
treasure, 64
trepan, 93
trivial, 27
Tuesday, 164
tuft-hunter, 85
turkey, 88
turnpike, 166
twit, 16

undertaker, 168
unless, 170
Unready, Ethelred the, 84
uproar, 43
upshot, 172
upside-down, 173

vamp, 182
vampire, 181
vendredi (Fr.), 165
villain, 38
vley (S. Afr.), 57
volksetymologie (Ger.), 51
volkslied (Ger.), 51

wahnsinn (Ger.), 176
wahnwitz (Ger.), 176
wanchancy, 176
wanton, 175
warfare, 179
wayfaring, 179
wayzgoose, 8
Wednesday, 164
ween, 110
-weise (Ger.), 115
welcome, 178
welfare, 179
welladay, 179
wellaway, 180
Welsh rabbit, 62
wergild, 16
werwolf, 181
Whitacre, 186
Whitsun, 58, *n.* 2
widower, 23
wildcat, 25
wildgoose chase, 184
willy-nilly, 97, *n.* 1
wiseacre, 185
withstand, 176, *n.* 1
witte brood sweken (Dutch), 78
woebegone, 180
wood, 124, *n.* 1

yawl, 90
yole (Fr.), 90
Younghusband, 90

zany, 105
zenana, 6, *n.* 2
zitterpappel (Ger.), 1, *n.* 1

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